



TYNWALD COURT OFFICIAL REPORT

RECORTYS OIKOIL
QUAIYL TINVAAL

PROCEEDINGS

DAALTYN

HANSARD

Douglas, Wednesday, 21st November 2018

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Present:

The President of Tynwald (Hon. S C Rodan)

In the Council:

The Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man (The Rt Rev. P A Eagles),
The Attorney General (Mr J L M Quinn QC),
Miss T M August-Hanson, Mr D C Cretney, Mr T M Crookall, Mr R W Henderson,
Mrs M M Hendy, Mrs K A Lord-Brennan, Mrs J P Poole-Wilson and Mrs K Sharpe
with Mr J D C King, Deputy Clerk of Tynwald.

In the Keys:

The Deputy Speaker (Mr C R Robertshaw) (Douglas East);
The Chief Minister (Hon. R H Quayle) (Middle);
Mr J R Moorhouse and Hon. G D Cregeen (Arbory, Castletown and Malew);
Hon. A L Cannan and Mr T S Baker (Ayre and Michael);
Hon. C C Thomas and Mrs C A Corlett (Douglas Central);
Miss C L Bettison (Douglas East);
Hon. D J Ashford and Mr G R Peake (Douglas North);
Mrs K J Beecroft (Douglas South);
Mr M J Perkins and Mrs D H P Caine (Garff);
Hon. R K Harmer and Hon. G G Boot (Glenfaba and Peel);
Mr W C Shimmins (Middle);
Mr R E Callister and Ms J M Edge (Onchan);
Dr A J Allinson (Ramsey);
Hon. L D Skelly (Rushen);
with Mr R I S Phillips, Clerk of Tynwald.

Business transacted

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Tynwald

The Court met at 10.30 a.m.

[MR PRESIDENT *in the Chair*]

The Deputy Clerk: Hon. Members, please rise for the President of Tynwald.

The President: Moghrey mie, good morning, Hon. Members.

5 **Members:** Moghrey mie, Mr President.

The President: The Lord Bishop will lead us in prayer.

PRAYERS

The Lord Bishop

Procedural

10 **The President:** Hon. Members, just before we start it would be very helpful to me in the Chair if Members who wish to speak would rise from their places or at least semi-rise to make absolutely sure that I see that they wish to speak, because I am conscious that on one or two occasions somebody who thought they had caught my eye had in fact not caught my eye. That would be helpful.

Thank you.

Written Question 23 – Personal Statement by the Attorney General

15

The President: Before we start, I have given permission to the learned Attorney to make a personal statement.

The Attorney General: Thank you, Mr President.

20

Hon. Members, if I could just refer you to Question 23 on the Question Paper yesterday, where I provided an Answer to Mrs Beecroft to the Question 'what the penalties are for the failure to register a deed or a debenture within the prescribed time period'. On reflecting on the Answer which I gave, I notice that although I made reference to section 80(3) of the Companies Act 1931 and section 223(1) of the Companies Act 2006 and made mention of the fine of £5,000, I ought to have added that under the Statute Law Revision Act 2017 a fine which was of the level

25

of £5,000 was increased to level 5 and so increased to £10,000, and I do apologise for that oversight.

Thank you.

30

The President: Thank you, Mr Attorney.

Order of the Day

8. Public Services Commission Act 2015 – Public Services Commission (Classes of Employees) (Amendment) Order 2018 approved

A Member of the Cabinet Office (Dr Allinson) to move:

That the Public Services Commission (Classes of Employees) (Amendment) Order 2018 [SD No 2018/0282] [MEMO] be approved.

The President: We turn to our Order Paper, Item 8, Public Services Commission Act, and I call on a Member of the Cabinet Office, Dr Allinson to move, please.

A Member of the Cabinet Office (Dr Allinson): Thank you, Mr President.

35 The Manx Utilities Authority was established in April 2014 from the merger of the Manx Electricity Authority and the Water and Sewage Authority. At the time of its formation it was identified that the different terms and conditions of employment would eventually need to be harmonised to ensure efficient operations and fairness across the workforce.

40 Since that time, significant work has been undertaken to identify the most appropriate employment structure for Manx Utilities. Staff and trade unions were consulted and 95% of those who responded supported the amalgamation of the current five different sets of terms and conditions into one. Early this year, the Council of Ministers agreed that employees of the Public Services Commission, working at Manx Utilities, could be directly employed by Manx Utilities. The purpose of the Order before the Court today is to enable this transfer to occur.
45 Following the transfer, it is intended to harmonise employment terms and conditions throughout Manx Utilities.

Members will be aware that the Cabinet Office is responsible for providing advice to the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers. Manx Utilities has a good working relationship with the Office of Human Resources and a Memorandum of Understanding is in the process of being
50 agreed between the Council of Ministers and Manx Utilities to formalise the provision of appropriate information. This arrangement allows Manx Utilities to continue to operate as a statutory board but ensures appropriate oversight is also in place. The alignment of employment terms and conditions within Manx Utilities will ensure its terms and conditions are appropriate, consistent and fair and improve its ability to deliver reliable and cost effective services to its
55 customers.

Mr President, I beg to move the motion standing my name.

The President: Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

60 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr President.
I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The President: Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge.

65 **Ms Edge:** Thank you, Mr President.

I would just like to ask a few questions with regard to this, and hope the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Dr Allinson, can advise me of the number of employees that are being transferred that are currently PSC employees; what grading system will be utilised in the future; and will all employees move to the new harmonised terms and conditions, which he has just confirmed?

70 However there are some specialist agreements in place in the MUA like BUPA and how is that going to be dealt with?

It also states that the resource implications will be met from allocated budgets. Can the Hon. Member advise what this allocation is and if he does not have that information can it be circulated? It raises serious concerns when an organisation is continuing to place additional charges on the people of the Island, when the employees in the £50,000-£70,000 bracket have increased by 14 in one year. The Hon. Member is obviously aware of this but I just wonder, are these changes that management have had enhanced grades prior to the changes before the Hon. Court today?

80 I would also like to know what the internal controls are that are going to be put in place to make sure of responsible, prudent, financial management and that there will be no increase to the public purse as this workforce group has a public sector pension underwritten by the Isle of Man Government and ultimately the taxpayers of the Isle of Man.

85 I am concerned that we are just shifting groups of employees in and out of terms and conditions to make the figures and the numbers employed in each employer group when all of the time even the numbers are increasing and salaries are increasing, and what is this cost to the public?

The President: Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker.

90 **Mr Baker:** Thank you, Mr President.

I see this as a positive move for the MUA and its ability to deliver service more cost effectively and efficiently and to be able to tailor their terms and conditions to the needs of the business. I would be grateful if the Chairman would articulate what issues the MUA were experiencing with their workforce that were caused by being under the auspices of the PSC and what benefits he expects to be able to achieve from the greater management flexibility that the MUA will be able to achieve as a result of these new arrangements?

The President: I call on the mover to reply, Dr Allinson.

100 **Dr Allinson:** Thank you, Mr President.

Thank you very much for the two groups of question, if I can just answer them in order: Ms Edge asked about the number of employees to be transferred. In 2014, prior to the merger, we had 382 staff; we now have 355, of those 78 were previously employed by the Water Board and 49 were previously employed in the sewerage sector. So around 45% of our total workforce will be switching over from the PSC to be employed purely by Manx Utilities under a JNC negotiating agreement.

110 She asked about the grading system to be used: there was a working group set up for this and with the unions and workers we have agreed on a recognised structured job evaluation with the methodology because that was thought to be appropriate for a utilities authority. We have a mix of very specific and unique technical and engineering roles but also more generic roles such as administration and office functions and so that was found to be the best way of trying to merge the terms and conditions.

115 She also asked about some of the historical private contracts which have included private medical care and those similarly will be regraded and will have a standard set of terms and conditions across the board, although obviously we are looking into how we train some of those historical contracts. These were set up by the MEA in the past and there have been no new private contracts, but we are dealing with some of the historical remnant of that time. She asked about resources for how to do this and these will come out of the Manx Utilities existing budget.

120 She commented on the some of the figures in our annual accounts which are laid before the Court in this session and they do show some of our employees earning between £50,000 and £75,000, the numbers have gone up. The board have addressed that and asked for breakdowns

of that. In the vast majority of cases that is not due to regrading, it is purely due to the fact that people's pay has increased in line with pay increases.

125 She asked about the amount of internal controls and key to this is the Memorandum of Understanding which is being drafted between us and the Council of Ministers. That memorandum will ensure that Manx Utilities puts into place decent job grading but also provides an annual report with stats like the staff numbers, like gender and work patterns, like recruitment and turnover, pay and grading, job evaluation statistics and absence data and we will be directly responsible, with the Office of Human Resources and the Council of Ministers, to
130 make sure we have decent oversight of our functions as a statutory board.

She asked for details that there would not be increases to the public purse. Obviously Manx Utilities works within a very set budget. We have announced, earlier this year, about having a decent pricing structure which gives stability and certainty both to domestic customers and also to industry in terms of how our charges will increase to meet for the long-term financial plan and these changes that we are proposing today fit in with that plan.
135

She also asked for the reasons for the change and made the comment of salary increases and numbers increasing. As I have said, since the merger there has been a reduction in the numbers of people working for Manx Utilities. We employ five apprentices every year and salaries are increasing very much along with the Government suggested increases and there is no ambition from Manx Utilities to deviate from the Government plan for pay restraint and pay increases.
140

Mr Baker asked about what issues were being experienced and it is sometimes quite difficult when you have a workforce under five different terms and conditions and each year, when we have to deal with pay negotiation, dealing with two very different groups and trying to amalgamate them. There are also the future issues of the Equalities Act and equal pay for equal work and when you have got different people from different historical backgrounds doing the same job and under different terms and conditions, that makes that very difficult. So that was one of the reasons, not only to correct a historical anomaly, but also to look to the future so that we can move forward.
145

In terms of the benefits I hope that we can have much better flexibility with our workforce. The culture has changed in Manx Utilities to merge the different elements, with this coming in, and when we have had decent pay negotiations and unified terms and conditions I hope we can have an even more unified service that will provide a much better service to the public.
150

Thank you, Mr President.

155 **The President:** Hon. Member, the motion is that the Public Services Commission (Classes of Employees) (Amendment) Order be approved. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**9. Social Security Act 2000; Pension Schemes Act 1995 –
Pensions Act 2014 (Application) (Amendment) Order 2018 approved**

The Minister for the Treasury to move:

That the Pensions Act 2014 (Application) (Amendment) Order 2018 [[SD No 2018/0264](#)] [[MEMO](#)] be approved.

160 **The President:** Item 9, Social Security Act, Pension Schemes Act, Minister for Treasury to move, Mr Cannan.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): Mr President, this Order amends the Order which applied to the Island the relevant parts of the UK Pensions Act 2014.

165 Section 24 of the Pensions Act 2014 as it has effect in the Island is amended by the Order.
That section, together was Schedule 14 to the Act, enables a sponsoring employer, or
administrator of a contracted-out occupational pension scheme to change the scheme where
they are otherwise prevented from doing so to increase the pension contributions scheme
members have to pay or to alter the future accrual of their pension benefits to take account of
170 increases in the employer's National Insurance contributions from April 2019, following the
abolition of contracting-out made by the 2014 Act.

The amendments made clarify that the power under section 24(2) of the Act may be used to
amend a public service pension scheme of a description specified in the regulations in
accordance with those regulations and make related provision.

175 The Order also inserts subsection (8) of section 56 into the 2014 Act as it has effect in the
Island, to give the Treasury the power, by order, to make transitional, transitory or saving
provision in connection with the application to the Island of any provision of the 2014 Act.

Furthermore, the Order replaces the definition of the applied legislation in the Order which
applied the 2014 Act to the Island so that it simply refers to the Pensions Act 2014 rather than to
each provision of the 2014 Act as applied to the Island. This is a technical amendment which
180 does not change the provisions of the Act as it has effect in the Island.

Further information has been provided to Hon. Members in the memorandum.

Mr President, I beg to move that Item 9 on the Order Paper be moved.

185 **The President:** The Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Peake.

Mr Peak: Thank you, Mr President.

I beg to second.

190 **The President:** I put the question as set out at Item 9. Those in favour, say aye; those against,
no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

10. Pension Schemes Act 1995 – Pension Schemes Legislation (Application) Order 2018 approved

The Minister for the Treasury to move:

*That the Pension Schemes Legislation (Application) Order 2018 [[SD No 2018/0265](#)] [[MEMO](#)]
be approved.*

The President: Item 10, Pension Schemes Act, Minister for Treasury again, Mr Cannan.

195 **The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan):** Mr President, the application to the Island of the
relevant parts of the UK Pensions Act 2014, amongst other things, created a new Manx State
Pension for people reaching state pensionable age on or after 6th April 2019.

The new Manx State Pension will replace the current state retirement pension, which has
two components: the basic state pension and the additional state pension.

200 Currently members of salary-related occupational pension schemes may be contracted out of
the additional state pension. However, from 6th April 2019, contracting-out will end.

This Order applies to the Island nine UK statutory instruments, which make consequential
and other provision necessary on the abolition of contracting-out for occupational pension
schemes. Each of the instruments concerns provisions related to salary related occupational
pension schemes.

205 Further information is provided in the memorandum, which has been circulated to
Hon. Members.

Mr President, I beg to move Item 10 on the Order Paper.

The President: Mr Peake.

210

Mr Peak: Mr President, I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The President: Hon. Members, I put the question as set out at Item 10. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**11. Pension Schemes Act 1995 –
Pension Schemes Act 1993 (Application) (Amendment) Order 2018 approved**

The Minister for the Treasury to move:

*That the Pension Schemes Act 1993 (Application) (Amendment) Order 2018
[SD No 2018/0273] [MEMO] be approved.*

215 **The President:** Item 11, Pension Schemes Act, Minister for Treasury.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): Mr President, this Order amends the Pension Schemes Act 1993, as that Act of the United Kingdom Parliament has effect in the Island, to allow the additional state pension rights of members of contracted-out occupational pension schemes which wind up to be restored by the trustees or managers of the scheme by paying a
220 contributions equivalent premium, regardless of how long the member has been in contracted-out employment or when the scheme winds up.

This will potentially provide a better outcome for members of occupational pension schemes where their schemes have failed, to deliver the benefits promised to them.

225 This Order further amends the Pensions Schemes Act 1993 as it has effect in the Island, and to the provisions which may be made by regulations for determining the amount required for restoring the additional state pension rights of a member of a contracted-out occupational pension scheme which winds up insolvent.

Further information is provided in the memorandum.

230 Mr President, I beg to move the Item numbered 11 on the Order Paper.

The President: Mr Peake.

Mr Peak: Thank you, Mr President.

235 I beg to second.

The President: I put the question as set out at Item 11. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**12. Pension Schemes Act 1995 –
Pension Schemes Legislation (Application) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2018 approved**

The Minister for the Treasury to move:

That the Pension Schemes Legislation (Application) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2018 [SD No 2018/0266] [MEMO] be approved.

The President: Item 12, Pension Schemes Act, Minister for Treasury.

240

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): Mr President, following this Hon. Court's approval of the previous Item, this Order now amends the Occupational Pension Schemes (Contracting-out) (Amount Required for Restoring State Scheme Rights and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 1998, as they have effect in the Island. Those Regulations specify the amount required for restoring the State scheme rights of members of contracted-out occupational pension schemes which are being wound up.

245

The changes make provision that the amount shall be the amount of contributions equivalent premium payable for that member, regardless of how long the member has been in employment for when the scheme winds up.

250

Further information has been provided in the memorandum which has been circulated to Hon. Members.

Mr President, I beg to move Item 12 on the Order Paper.

The President: Mr Peake.

255

Mr Peak: Mr President, I beg to second.

The President: Hon. Members, I put the question as set out at Item 12. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

260

Mr Thomas: Hear, hear.

**13. Social Security Act 2000 –
Social Security Legislation (Benefits) (Application) (No. 2) Order 2018 approved**

The Minister for the Treasury to move:

That the Social Security Legislation (Benefits) (Application) (No. 2) Order 2018 [SD No 2018/0267] [MEMO] be approved.

The President: Item 13, Social Security Act 2000, Minister for Treasury.

265

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): Mr President, this Order applies to the Island the Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order 2018. That Order relates particularly to the additional state pension.

270

The annual revaluation of earnings factors ensures that the value of the earnings on which a person has paid National Insurance contributions, or the flat-rate contributions that they have paid, which give rise to entitlement to additional state pension benefits, keeps pace with increases in earnings over time.

It also ensures that the preserved rights of persons who have left a contracted-out salary-related pension scheme before retirement and for those who have retired from such a scheme keep pace with increases in earnings over time.

275 Mr President, Revaluation Orders, such as the one currently before Hon. Members, are made each year to revalue the historic earnings factors in line with the movement in average earnings in Great Britain, they are therefore positive in nature.

Further information is provided in the memorandum which has been circulated.

Mr President, I beg to move the Item numbered 13 on the Order Paper.

280 **The President:** Mr Peake.

Mr Peak: Mr President, I beg to second.

285 **The President:** Hon. Members, I put the question as set out at Item 13. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

14. Equality Act 2017 – Equality Act 2017 (Sex Equality Rule) (Exceptions) Regulations 2018 approved

The Minister for the Treasury to move:

That the Equality Act 2017 (Sex Equality Rule) (Exceptions) Regulations 2018 [SD No 2018/0268] [MEMO] be approved.

The President: Item 14, Equality Act 2017, Minister for Treasury.

290 **The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan):** Mr President, the Equality Act 2017 of Tynwald requires occupational pension schemes to have a sex equality rule for the equal treatment of men and women in occupational pension schemes.

These Regulations exempt from the sex equality rule certain rules, practices, actions and decisions relating to occupational pension schemes. They replace the same exceptions which already exist under the 'equal treatment rule' provided for in the Pensions Act 1995 as that Act of the UK Parliament has effect in the Island. The effect of the legislation is unchanged.

295 Further information has been provided in the memorandum which has been circulated to Hon. Members.

Mr President, I beg to move the Item numbered 14 on the Order Paper.

300 **The President:** Mr Peake.

Mr Peak: Mr President, I beg to second.

The President: Hon. Members, I put the question as set out at Item 14. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**15-16. Social Security Administration Act 1992 –
Budgeting Loans (Recovery by Deductions from Benefits) (Amendment)
Regulations 2018 approved;
Summary Jurisdiction Act 1989 –
Fines Etc. (Application for Benefit Deductions) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 approved**

A Member of the Treasury (Mr Peake) to move:

15. That the Budgeting Loans (Recovery by Deductions from Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 [[SD No 2018/0269](#)] [[MEMO](#)] be approved.

16. That the Fines Etc. (Application for Benefit Deductions) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 [[SD No 2018/0270](#)] [[MEMO](#)] be approved.

305 **The President:** Item 15, Social Security Administration Act, Minister of the Treasury, Mr Peake to move.

A Member of the Treasury (Mr Peake): Thank you, Mr President.

310 With your permission, I would like to move the Items numbered 15 and 16 on the Order Paper together but have them voted on them separately.

The President: Are we content, Hon. Members?

Members: Agreed.

315

The President: Agreed.

Mr Peake: Thank you, Mr President.

320 These Items respectively amend two sets of Social Security Regulations to allow budgeting loans and fines to be recovered by making deductions from the new Manx State Pension and Pension Supplement, under the Pension Supplement Order 2018, both of which will be introduced in April next year.

325 The first Item also amends Regulations to allow deductions to be made from bereavement support payment in recovering social security budgeting loans in the same way as deductions from previous bereavement benefits could be made, and makes for some tidying up amendments.

Further information is provided in the memorandum which has been circulated to Hon. Members.

Mr President, I beg to move Items numbered 15 and 16 on the Order Paper.

330

The President: Mr Cannan.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): I beg to second.

335 **The President:** Hon. Members, I first put the question that Item 15 be approved. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Secondly, the motion as set out at Item 16. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**17. Social Security Act 2000 –
Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 (Application)
(Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2018 approved**

A Member of the Treasury (Mr Peake) to move:

That the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 (Application) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2018 [[SD No 2018/0271](#)] [[MEMO](#)] be approved.

340 **The President:** Item 17, Social Security Act. Mr Peake.

A Member of the Treasury (Mr Peake): Thank you, Mr President.

This Order amends the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, as that Act of the United Kingdom Parliament has effect in the Isle of Man, to extend the circumstances in which certain people who are entitled to income support at the relevant time can qualify for a Christmas bonus. It also adds bereavement support payment as a qualifying benefit for the Christmas bonus. Both of these measures enhance the current provisions and are of a positive nature.

345 Mr President, I beg to move Item 17 on the Order Paper.

350

The President: Mr Cannan.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): Mr President, Christmas is coming early! I beg to second. *(Laughter)*

355

Mr Cretney: Thank you very much, Alfred.

The President: I put the question at Item 17. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**18. Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 –
Child Benefit (Rates) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 approved**

A Member of the Treasury (Mr Peake) to move:

That the Child Benefit (Rates) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 [[SD No 2018/0272](#)] [[MEMO](#)] be approved.

360 **The President:** Item 18, Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act. Member of the Treasury, Mr Peake.

A Member of the Treasury (Mr Peake): Thank you, Mr President.

365 These Regulations introduce a time limit for a person to apply to have their income for Child Benefit purposes determined using their current year income, rather than the usual two-year income. It also provides that bereavement support payments are disregarded in determining a person's income for Child Benefit purposes.

Further information has been provided in a memorandum which has been circulated to Hon. Members.

370 Mr President, I beg to move Item 18 on the Order Paper.

The President: Mr Cannan.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

375

The President: Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

380

I am very happy to support the motion before us – it is pragmatic and sensible – but I just want to stretch the elastic slightly for a moment with regard to how we are looking at the application of Child Benefit.

385

I would remind Hon. Members that when Social Security was with Social Care back in 2014 it was me that brought the matter of means testing Child Benefit to Tynwald and sought approval for the changes that have now been in place for some years. The spirit of intent when those proposals were brought forward and enacted was at a time of great pressure to ensure that the well-off did not receive Child Benefit, and when it was applied there was a sense that, although it was unpopular, it was fair. The beginning threshold, to remind Members, is that any household earning less than £60,000 gets the full 100%, and that migrated up progressively until you got to a point where if your household earned over £90,000 you did not receive Child Benefit. The feeling was that that was, on balance, fair.

390

However, when Social Care was quite rightly amalgamated with Health and Social Care, quite rightly Social Security went to Treasury. The then Treasury Minister – I did not agree with this – decided to drop the thresholds by a further £10,000 and in doing so he was changing the spirit of intent because he was pushing the first threshold down to £50,000, and we are talking here about quite low levels.

395

The point I particular want to ask Mr Peake simply to take back to his colleagues and officers in Treasury to think about is that that lower threshold has now been sitting there, unmoved, effectively since 2014, which means that as inflation has eaten into that and incomes have been adjusted families on quite reasonable incomes are now passing through thresholds which mean they are starting to lose Child Benefit.

400

I am not proposing anything here, because it is not within the remit of this motion, but I would please ask Treasury to look at this. It is quite possible, for example, that if the Treasury Minister brought a new tax allowance threshold in, pushed it up, effectively a family in certain circumstances could find their net position is actually limited because they have crossed a Child Benefit threshold.

405

I support the motion before us. I am not asking for a detailed reply now, it would not be fair; but I would ask if Treasury, Mr President, could look at this again.

The President: Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge.

410

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

I just really concur with the Deputy Speaker. What I have concern about – and I am sure you do take it into consideration when you are looking at this – is what impact it has on other Government policies, because there are thresholds throughout numerous Government policies and whether they all tie up and whether they should tie up ... I think there should be one threshold that is driven through Government policy as a whole, because I do wonder ... The average median earnings for last year were £29,016 and if you add that up it is virtually £60,000, which is where the threshold was previously on this. I just wonder, are we not encouraging people to get out into the economy, earning? If they go over these thresholds, they might decide it is not worth working, as a couple, and one might not then contribute to the economy. So I just wonder where that policy sits across all Government policies with the threshold.

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420

The President: Mr Cannan.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

425 While I did reserve my remarks, I did not quite expect this debate to veer off on this tangent. But I think it is worth highlighting a couple of points.

I was slightly surprised to hear the former Minister for Policy and Reform on his feet on this, because under the last administration Child Benefit was effectively frozen, means testing was talked about and I think we saw quite severe economic pressure put on our families.

430 Let's be clear: what you have been actively supporting with Treasury in the last two Budgets is proactive increases in the Child Benefit payments (**Mr Shimmins:** Hear, hear.) as we seek to put more money back into people's pockets. Let me be clear that those rates have been not only increases in Child Benefit but other benefits to support our working families, and of course if we think back to the additional support we have given to children for pre-school, for example, and the additional uplifts in Employed Person's Allowance.

435 So, to answer both Hon. Members who have been on their feet, I am confident that first and foremost – let me be absolutely clear – we are taking very positive steps to put money back into people's pockets and to make sure that actually the benefits of being in work and staying in work far exceed this debate of whether we should or should not be sitting back and just taking the state benefits. Let me be clear: we are trying to design a welfare system that supports our working families, and that has been a key target and a key message for this Government.

440 In terms of thresholds, I would say to the Hon. Member thank you for raising that. Clearly, we are always looking at the thresholds –

445 **The Deputy Speaker:** That is all I am asking.

The Minister: – around where benefits are applying and not applying. That is part of our annual budgetary process. We will clearly be looking at that for Child Benefit alongside our other benefits, including how EPA, for example, which is really helping some of our most low paid stay in work and we are trying to help them through these cliff edges which the Hon. Deputy Speaker often talks about, so that is certainly going to be a focus for us. And in broader terms, the Treasury policy when we are looking at all these benefits and support mechanisms is to ensure that they are being appropriately applied.

450 So I think that the answer to the question is we will of course look at appropriate rates. I do not think that median earnings and the applied rates for Child Benefits are too out of kilter; I still think a family earning £80,000 and more cannot get Child Benefit at the moment, and as the Hon. Member said, the £50,000 point also provides a mechanism of reducing Child Benefit appropriately.

460 So we do need to look at this, we do need to stay on top of it, but let's not walk away from this with any other impression that from our perspective – from Treasury's perspective, certainly – we have regarded Child Benefit as a very important tool for helping our families through what has been a difficult period. I am hoping that with some of the increases that we are seeing now, some of the wage inflation increases and some of the measures that we have also taken – I might point to, of course, the critical measure you have all been supporting, the increase in the tax threshold – we are getting money into our working families and of course we will be looking at Child Benefit very carefully next year.

465 **The President:** I call on the mover to reply. Mr Peake.

470 **Mr Peake:** Thank you very much, Mr President.

Yes, this small amendment is just about helping people to focus on the tax year to actually help their Child Benefit.

I must thank Mr Robertshaw and Ms Edge for allowing our Treasury Minister to give a really nice taster of what is about to come in the Budget. So thank you very much to them – he was able to give some great direction there.

Thank you very much for your support. Thanks, Mr President.

The President: The motion is that the Child Benefit (Rates) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 be approved. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**19. Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People –
Select committee to investigate and report on provision –
Debate commenced**

The Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael (Mr Baker) to move:

That Tynwald appoints a Select Committee of three members to investigate and report on the provision of accommodation for vulnerable young people, with special reference to those leaving care and people with autism.

480 **The President:** Item 19, Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People. I call on the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker, to move.

Mr Baker: Thank you very much, Mr President.

485 The motion in front of this Hon. Court today is to appoint a select committee of three Members to investigate and report on the provision of accommodation for vulnerable young people, with special reference to those leaving care and people with autism. This has arisen from my Children's Champion role and it is clear to me that we have a need to do far better than we are doing. We need an approach which goes across Government and takes a wider perspective than we currently have. The motion specifically focuses on those two groups I have
490 identified in order to achieve a significant step forward in what I believe is a need to significantly raise our game in terms of the way we provide for these particular groups and others on the Island.

It is absolutely clear to me that we are not joined up, and that is why I believe a select committee is required rather than this just being left in the hands of one particular Government
495 Department or even one or two Departments working together. That was reinforced for me by conversations that have arisen from me stepping forward with this motion. It is more than clear that these issues have gone unaddressed for years and years on this Island, and if we do not do something different, why do we expect any different outcomes? I have been very encouraged by the reaction from individuals in both the Department of Health and Social Care and the
500 Department of Infrastructure, which are two key areas that come together on this issue.

We need to recognise, Hon. Members, that accommodation is fundamental to individuals' life chances. But it is not just about the box that people live in; it is about the services that they need to support that living. Both of those things need to come together. We recognise this in how we care for our elderly. Terms like 'sheltered accommodation' and 'extra care' are terms
505 we are all familiar with. We recognise that there are individuals at different stages of their lives who need additional care over and above just the places they live in, and it is the same issue with these particular groups that I have identified, and others.

It is incumbent on us to create an environment for these people to thrive, not just to survive, and my core contention is that we are simply, as an Island, not doing well enough. Where there
510 is provision, it is disjointed and *ad hoc*. It is often very dependent on the efforts of particular individuals or third sector organisations, many of whom are doing amazing things with very few resources. However, often there is no real provision. Individuals are left to take their chances in unsuitable circumstances. Many individuals end up in poor-quality private accommodation, lacking support. They almost inevitably struggle. At times, it seems we are predestining these

515 individuals to a cycle of deprivation, poverty, mental and physical health issues, and even ultimately to imprisonment.

We are complicit in this, Hon. Members. By failing to act, we are effectively endorsing this never-ending cycle which has gone on for many years on this Island. I am sure that none of us intend this to be the case, but by failing to look more holistically that is what we are actually achieving.

The reality of this is that much of this and the consequences of inaction are actually incurring significant public expense. In many cases we are funding that unsatisfactory private rented accommodation through the benefits system. We are dealing with the consequences of the mental health issues and the addiction, as was abundantly clear in the excellent debate yesterday around the Chief Constable's Report. We are seeing issues going from generation to generation and reflecting that in future demand for care services and for early interventions etc.

Hon. Members, are we prepared to let this continue and just hand it on to the next generation with another five years of inaction, or are we going to do something about it?

I believe there is a better way, and that is why I am stood here raising this motion today. I have identified two groups of young people that specifically need to be considered: care leavers and young people with autism. Both of those groups, it is very clear to me, we are failing. We are failing, and I do not say that statement lightly. But I am sure there are other groups out there where we are not meeting their needs. This is not a restrictive list. It is intended to be focused particularly on those two groups, but to allow others to step forward and have their voices here if they are affected by this in another way.

It is clear to me that for care leavers and young people with autism the provision as an Island is not up to scratch and we must do better. If we accept that, we need to do something about it. We need a holistic approach to this. We need to consider what other jurisdictions are doing. Where is best practice? What does that look like? Let's not reinvent the wheel, but equally let's not just blindly copy what others are doing. What is best for the Manx context has to be the question that the committee, if granted, is seeking to understand.

We need to understand things from the individuals' point of view, the service users. What do they need? How does this change over time, at different stages of their lives? As the Hon. Member for Douglas East, Mr Robertshaw, might say, how do we personalise the service to meet the requirements of young people as they go through the different stages of their lives?

We need to engage with stakeholder groups, support groups, third sector organisations, parents – particularly of young people with autism, they are a hugely impacted group and one that is really concerned about the provision: what is going to happen to their young person when the parents are not able to provide that care themselves? We need to hear their voices. Again, a select committee is the ideal vehicle to do that.

We need to check out what we already have the capability of doing. Indeed, in some cases it seems that we have previously done some things and those things have now stopped, for whatever reason. Whether it is budget cuts, whether it is the fact that there have been changes in political or officer personnel, things have lapsed. We need to look at those things and say 'Do we need to reinvigorate some of those things?'

We clearly need to understand the financial implications, not just of what we might do going forward but what we are already spending indirectly through the benefits system and through costs into Government Departments and services such as the Chief Constable talked about yesterday. What are the alternatives?

This is not a challenge that is unique to us; there are many jurisdictions grappling with the same issues. I am not going to go through a long list of what we might do or what other people are thinking about because that is something that the committee can do, but I will point to one example: Kent County Council, who earlier this year announced that they were considering acting as guarantors for care leavers in terms of their rental. That reflected the issue that young people leaving foster or residential care can find it difficult to access private rented accommodation without a guarantor. After they have turned 18 the local authority is no longer

responsible for financing their accommodation and many have to fall back on to the benefits system. When looking at a place to live they are often competing with other young people in work who have family members that act in the guarantor role, or they may even have financial resources of their own.

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Just one example of an individual: a 24-year-old young lady called Sophie Dunston told the BBC that when she left foster care at the age of 18 she had to move into a shared house with alcoholics and ex-prisoners. That is the reality, Hon. Members, of what we are actually doing with these young people by failing to provide a solution. What do we think happens to those young people? Whether it is in Kent or whether it is in the Isle of Man, they fall into a downward spiral which effectively, as I said earlier, predestines their life outcomes. A simple question for us, Hon. Members – and remember, we are corporate parents particularly for looked-after children – is: would it be good enough for your child? It certainly would not be good enough for mine to do that. Would you throw them into unsuitable private accommodation, leaving them prey to all sorts of malign influences at that age? Would you do it at any age? You certainly would not go for a hard cut-off and when you are at a certain age you are on your own. It does not work like that. As this young lady said, quite a lot of landlords do not want to rent to a young person on housing benefit without a guarantor, and when you say you are a care leaver they do not want to know at all. It is a massive barrier. Not all young people in care are trouble. That is the reality.

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These are young people's lives. We have got a choice, Hon. Members: to do something about it or to continue to turn a blind eye. What we are looking for is a package solution here. We need to be integrated, we need to be holistic, and it is not going to happen by accident. We have to be intentional about this. We need to do something different. We have an opportunity. We are small enough and should be joined-up enough to be world class. Why can't the Isle of Man be the best jurisdiction for these issues? We can, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) we absolutely can, but right now we are far away from it.

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We have got to remember fundamentally it is the most vulnerable who are losing out as a result and it really affects their life chances. Hon. Members, please support this motion. There may be people who say we do not need another select committee. There may be some who say we can leave it to the Departments. There may be some who say, 'Do we really care?' The answer to all those things is we have to do something different. Otherwise, unless we do something different, we are just going to get the same outcomes as we have got for years. So let's start a process which will break this cycle. Until we start the journey, we will never get to the destination. Let's take the first step today.

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Mr President, I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

The President: I will call the Hon. Member who is prepared to second – Mrs Corlett, Hon. Member.

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Mrs Corlett: Thank you, Mr President.

I beg to second Mr Baker's motion. There is not much more I can add to what he has already said, but I would like to reiterate that for looked-after children we are the corporate parent and we need to understand and accept our responsibilities in that role. We must ensure that vulnerable younger people have accommodation that is safe and suitable for them, just as we would for our own children when they are leaving home.

610

There is certainly a willingness to work together across Departments to address this and I am of the opinion that forming a committee to look specifically at this issue will only further that collaboration.

615

Thank you.

The President: Hon. Member for Douglas East, Miss Bettison.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President, and –

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The President: Miss Bettison, (*Laughter*) the other Member for Douglas East.

Mr Crookall: The good-looking one.

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The Deputy Speaker: Ladies first! Sorry.

Miss Bettison: I rise to wholeheartedly support the intention of this motion, but also to query the mechanism for resolving the problem.

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Mr Baker said himself in a debate yesterday that we already have the ability to jointly commission services and deliver services in a joined-up way. There is absolutely no question we need allocated accommodation for care leavers, those with autism and vulnerable young people experiencing other complex care needs. This needs to be an established, not an *ad hoc*, service. Would a referral into SPCC not have been a consideration, or perhaps a CoMin working party? I do not know, but I am concerned about setting an unnecessary precedent and placing administrative resource implications on the Clerk of Tynwald's Office for things that I believe should be Government's responsibility. Should we not concurrently be addressing the silos that have led us to this point?

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All that said, if a committee does remain the preferred mechanism of Hon. Members, then I believe a time limit for reporting should be included. Therefore, I circulate an amendment in my name to include at the end of the motion 'and that the Committee report by May 2019.'

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I beg to move:

To add at the end:

'and that the Committee report by May 2019.'

The President: Hon. Member for Garff, Mr Perkins.

Mr Perkins: Thank you, Mr President.

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I will be brief because I think most of the things have been covered, but I would just like to point out to Hon. Members that in response to the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee request for evidence regarding mental health and the homeless a comment came home to me and it was made by the homeless charity, Graih. It went something like this: 'How on earth do you expect a homeless person to attend a medical appointment when they are sleeping rough or dossing on a friend's sofa? The appointment letter just would not get to them.'

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I know we have got mechanisms in place. As has been alluded to, we are failing our young people. We need a committee to find out how they are working, what we can do to improve them and should we do things differently. Let's get best practice, as the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael suggested. These are all questions that the committee must look into and we must act on it, Hon. Members.

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Taking the point that Mrs Anne Corlett for Douglas Central made yesterday, early intervention is paramount as a small investment of money in the right area saves us thousands in the long run and lessens the problems that we get going down the line. It is important to know where to invest that money and the committee should just do that.

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I will be giving the motion my full support and also the Hon. Member for Douglas's amendment.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Ashford.

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The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Ashford): Thank you, Mr President.

I rise more than happy to support the motion. I am happy to second Miss Bettison's amendment as well while I am on my feet.

670 I do not think any Hon. Member can really stand and say that they do not believe there is a gap at the moment between what is happening with vulnerable young adults going out of care and into the community. For many of those young adults it is a scary thing. It is a change in their lives. They are going out on their own, effectively. As Mrs Corlett, the Hon. Member for Douglas Central just alluded to, while they are in care the Government of course is the corporate parent, but you do not generally get to a stage with a parent where the child reaches a certain age and
675 that is it, the parent just cuts them off and they are left to their own devices. So I think we do need a change in the way that we do things and I thank the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, the Children's Champion, Mr Baker, for bringing this motion before us today.

There are workstreams already underway in the Social Policy and Children's Committee, so I do not want Hon. Members to be under any illusions that this is something that Government has
680 ignored, but I see this committee as complementing those workstreams that are already underway and bringing some more focus to them.

I think what we need to start doing, particularly with young adults, is avoiding cliff edges where they basically go out, they end up in accommodation and they feel isolated and on their own. Certainly in cases I have seen and dealt with, with young vulnerable adults, that is where
685 the problems then start emerging, where they end up either in the wrong crowd or they end up getting depressed and mental health problems start kicking in as well.

So I think it is very important that this is something that we look at. The Hon. Member Mr Baker said we need to change the way we have been doing things, things have been going on for a very long time. Funnily enough, one of the things that came to mind was the old Albert
690 Einstein quote that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. We have made progress in the Social Policy and Children's Committee on this, but like I say, I do believe this committee actually complements that and will help break down some of the silos.

In terms of a joined-up approach, I quite agree that is very much the way that we have to go,
695 and again I think the committee will assist in that work.

I would like to thank Miss Bettison for bringing forward the amendment to put an end date on the committee to say that it should report by May 2019. I think the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael would agree that is extremely helpful.

So I would urge Hon. Members to support the motion before them and Miss Bettison's
700 amendment because I think we do need to move into a new environment of dealing with these issues. There has been work already done and the Social Policy Committee has been driving that, but I think this committee takes that a step further and brings even more clarity and focus to it.

With that, Mr President, I will sit down.

705 **The President:** Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Sharpe.

Mrs Sharpe: Thank you, Mr President.

I stand before this Hon. Court today as the political Member for the Children and Families Division of the Department of Health and Social Care.

710 As many of you will know, I spent four years researching the past 150-year history of looked-after children in the Isle of Man. No matter which century my interviewees came from, they all had the same three problems on leaving care: where could they afford to live, where could they live safely, and how could they combat loneliness. Yes, there is now a drop-in centre for care leavers, which does a very important job, but the majority of care leavers reveal that they use
715 the centre not necessarily to liaise with their social workers but because they are lonely. Yes, a leavers' grant is now given to help secure accommodation, but there is a lack of appropriate properties on the Island. Care leavers can find themselves sofa surfing or living in substandard

bedsits, sometimes run by unscrupulous landlords who are only too keen to take advantage of them.

720 Mr President, I could cite you quotations describing these very same problems going back 150 years, and in some cases we are still looking after the children of the children of the children we looked after 150 years ago. It is plain to me that as a country – and I include the rest of Britain – we have still not got it right when it comes to the care and aftercare of our looked-after children. We must do better than this and we must break the cycle.

725 There is important work going on, which the Minister mentioned, which promises to significantly improve housing provision for care leavers as well as young people with autism, but to put this in place I believe the relevant Departments need Tynwald support. I wholeheartedly agree with Mr Baker's motion and urge Hon. Members to support the setting up of a committee which can focus, for the very first time, on researching best practice and recommending how
730 this historical problem might at last be solved.

Thank you.

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Poole-Wilson.

735 **Mrs Poole-Wilson:** Thank you, Mr President.

I also wholeheartedly support this motion. As a trustee of St Christopher's (Isle of Man), which as Hon. Members will know has responsibility for providing residential care for looked-after children and young people, I am more than aware of the challenge for young people leaving care when it comes to finding suitable accommodation.

740 The aftercare service at St Christopher's runs the drop-in centre that the Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Sharpe, alluded to has a typical caseload of 50 to 60 young people. Many of those young people Mrs Sharpe correctly pointed out are coming to that drop-in centre because of problems of loneliness and isolation but also needing help with life skills. They have a variety of needs, but the availability of appropriate accommodation is high on that list of needs and, as has
745 already been mentioned by other speakers, has been a problem for a considerably long time. Particular problems are the issue of the number of young people living in poor conditions in privately owned flats and bedsits. The other particular problem is what you might term hidden homelessness or the sofa surfing, where young people do not have any permanent accommodation and are drifting from place to place, finding a bed wherever they can in
750 somebody else's potentially substandard accommodation.

There are some good examples of accommodation on the Isle of Man, but they are dealing with only a handful of cases. Examples include the semi-independent homes that St Christopher's operate, which are available to young people aged 16 to 18. But the cliff edge is a problem because once those young people reach 18 they are no longer allowed to remain in
755 those semi-independent homes and we do not currently provide anything for them to move on to, save that St Christopher's also does operate two homes which are currently occupied by two young mothers and their babies, but again, whilst this is excellent for those individuals, it is not enough for the numbers of young people who are in difficulties on our Island.

I am extremely heartened today not only by what the Minister has said but also the Member
760 for Children and Families about the work that is ongoing, and I am also heartened that I have heard about a very productive meeting in the last week or so that involved officers from the Department of Infrastructure, the Department of Health and Social Care and members of St Christopher's to start to discuss what the challenges are, where the gaps are and how to start to formulate pathways and strategy to address this. But I agree that a committee and Tynwald
765 support for a committee would absolutely be vital to support this, to do the research, to come up with innovative solutions, to really make a difference.

I agree, for a small Island we should be able to get this right. We should be able to be innovative and best in class, and actually enable these young people who are the most vulnerable in our society to be given a real opportunity to become members of our society who

770 can hold down jobs, who can make relationships, who can bring up their own families, to stop
the cycle of deprivation and vulnerability. So I will be supporting the motion and I thank the Hon.
Member for Ayre and Michael for bringing it.

Mr Cretney and another Member: Hear, hear.

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The President: Hon. Member for Ramsey, Dr Allinson.

Dr Allinson: Thank you, Mr President.

780 I rise to fully support the motion. What we are talking here, really, is planning for the
transition from childhood to adulthood. That planning takes time, but that planning is incredibly
important so that that young person can live a fulfilling and productive life. That is what all of us
want from our citizens, what we want from our society; and yet, by not planning ahead, not
giving these people the right life skills, we are not allowing them to be productive members of
society, coming back into that society, being part of that society.

785 In terms of that transition, that needs to start fairly early – we know the people’s birthdays,
we know when they are going to hit 18. That planning also supports the carers. Whether those
be foster parents, whether those be biological parents, one of the aspects from the Social Affairs
Policy Review Committee report on mental health was the burden that is often put on carers to
look after people, and we need to take some of that burden on and recognise it.

790 In my work with fostering agencies I know of foster carers who, even after people have left at
the age of 18, welcome them back year after year on a voluntary basis to be that surrogate
parent. So a lot of good work is going on in our society but it is based on good will, not on
strategy or planning, and that is what I hope would come out of this select committee.

795 In 2009 in England they passed the Autism Act, which is still the first and only condition-
specific legislation, because they saw autism and other neuro-diverse conditions as being very
specific issues that needed to be addressed. I would hope that commissioning decisions in the
future can be based on knowledge and awareness of autism and informed by people with
autism themselves but also their carers and families because they often know far more about
the condition than healthcare professionals or necessarily social workers. But that knowledge
800 needs to be passed on. We need generic training in terms of autism and neuro-diverse
conditions across Social Services, but we also need specific training for those who are going to
provide care. Autism brings forward some specific challenges, particularly in terms of housing
and accommodation, whereby if you get it right people can develop, people can remain calm,
people can actually fulfil their potential, but if they are thrown into a very disruptive
805 environment their development can actually go backwards.

Again, a lot of these proposals are not necessarily financially driven, they are actually using
resources the best way, based on evidence, based on knowledge, to provide the right care for
those young people. But I think it is vital, if we are going to deal with a cycle of deprivation, that
as we discussed yesterday, we deal with it in the proper way. So certainly looking into how we
810 can work across Government to actually make sure that young people as they become adults are
cared for, for as long as they need and in the best way possible for them, I think is eminently
sensible and I thank the Hon. Member for bringing this matter to the Court.

The President: Deputy Speaker, Mr Robertshaw.

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The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President. My apologies to my colleague in Douglas East
for trying to jump the gun.

I am very supportive of the motion, very much needed. As Minister for Social Care, and
bearing in mind the issues with regard to corporate parenting, you can understand that this
820 issue was very much right in the crosshairs for me and it caused enormous worry and concern.

825 He highlights particularly this issue about moving out from care into the wider world and I just want to explain to him where this whole concept of unified Government came from: it came from this, because if you look at somebody coming out of direct care and trying to find their way in an adult world, they could easily continue to have educational issues, so there is engagement with the Department for Education; it could be an employment issue, so it could easily be engagement with the Department for Enterprise; it could be a financial issue, so it could be engagement with Social Security in Treasury; it could be, actually, a health matter, and we are now concerned as the Department for Health and Social Care; as mentioned somewhere here, it could be a housing issue, so it could not only be DoI but it could also be a number or one of the local authorities; it could actually be a behavioural problem and therefore could quite easily be Home Affairs. It could actually be a third sector organisation trying to lock into all of this. As adults without difficulties who understand the world, we have difficulties dealing with this and yet we expect a vulnerable person to negotiate their way through this.

830 Why is it that I came and keep coming to the Court about the absolute importance that must be associated with unified Government so we are able, as the Hon. Member says, to wrap ourselves round the individual and create personalised care? We will not do it like this. We will have to find another way. We will have to have budgets locked around this issue. We will have to have a departmental Member who is completely cross departmental. That Member is not in a Department; that Member is across all the Departments because you have a unified organisation. He has absolutely put his finger on it.

840 This is where it started for me, and I thought, 'We cannot carry on like this.' So I wish his select committee well and I hope he arrives at some sort of similar conclusions as I arrived at, because it was a very painful journey for me.

845 Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Callister.

The President: The Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Callister.

850 **Mr Callister:** Thank you, Mr President.

I think there have been some amazing comments already made this morning and I just want to congratulate my colleague from Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker, for a wonderful opening speech and opening remarks. I would also congratulate my colleague from Council, Mrs Jane Poole-Wilson for her comments.

855 I am probably one of the few people in this Chamber – I am sorry if I am going to get a bit emotional, I apologise, because I have actually come through the care system, so a lot of what Mr Baker says I can actually relate to. I knew the struggles from leaving care to getting full-time work, to finding opportunities, references, housing. I think most people would say, especially my family, that I have turned out okay. But there was a lot of time in that period when I knew the struggles, where people had to take a chance on me, had to give me an opportunity.

860 I remember being appointed as a trustee on the Independent Monitoring Board and how proud I was to represent that organisation, which was with St Christopher's at the time. Going in and speaking to people, vulnerable people, who were either there on welfare grounds, had been sentenced there by the courts or were there for social reasons. It was a job that I was absolutely proud to do and I was proud that somebody gave me the chance to do that because that was a real opportunity. It was a volunteer position and probably set me on the way to becoming an Onchan Commissioner and now to be in this Hon. Court.

870 But I do know the struggle, probably more than most in here, about a vulnerable person having to go through life and then being dropped at the age of 16, 17, 18, even though I had some fantastic social workers, it was a struggle. And everything Mr Baker said I actually relate to because I know what it was like when you have ... A lot of it was my own fault and I am not

875 disputing that. It was not a case that I came from a bad background, it was just a string of
circumstances from my mum not being very well, I was in there for that reason, but then I was in
there for my own reason as well. So what Mr Baker has said in his opening remarks I fully
understand and I get that. It was a struggle in my early 20s of getting those opportunities. But
then I started to get my life turned around, but it is incredibly difficult to turn your life around.

880 I tell people a story about when I left school and I was just doing some jobs and whatever
else, there was a period of time when I was on my own, but then somebody offered me a job at
the Airport and the job was I had to be there for six o'clock in the morning, every day, and I was
about 17, I think, at the time. When I look back it was the craziest job in the world because I had
to be there for six o'clock the morning and I did not have a driving licence and I used to have to
hitch every day, and I did that for four years. Somebody would always pick me up, because I
knew the shift started at six o'clock, but it set me on a path in respect of life, about the sacrifice
885 you have got to do to actually get going.

I am also proud, and I have said this before, with regard to the Department of Education and
the old DED giving me grants to go off and get my professional qualifications, because I left
school with very few qualifications, so I was very proud and I have always said that. And that is
why I am a massive fan of lifelong learning. Because some people do leave school with no
890 education and they do realise at a later point they have to go back and get qualifications. I am
proud of that; I could not do it on my own and I am proud of the funding that Government gave
me to give me the qualifications, to give me the confidence to get the jobs I needed, to end up in
this place. And I have always said I think there is a press release coming out today, I have just
come back from Jersey, and I was proud to represent this Court, to actually say what great things
895 this Court does. If I look back when I was 17, 18, there is no way I could have imagined, almost
30 years later, I would be standing and sitting in this Court, listening and taking part in the
debates.

Mr Baker's motion is long overdue as far as I feel. There is a section of our society that needs
that extra support. It needs people to give us an opportunity and I have said that everywhere in
900 my life. I am always grateful when somebody gives me that extra opportunity. I was grateful to
the people who gave me a job and the chance when I worked at the Airport when I was 17, I
worked there for over four years, loved it to bits. I only earned £2 an hour, but did over 100
hours a week, but I learned a family circle, I learned with regard to time management, of making
sure that I embraced myself in the roles and the jobs that I did. And then later on I was able to
905 get the financial support I needed to educate myself again through courses and professional
qualifications, which then gave me an opportunity in the finance sector, and I was able to turn
my life around. At every stage of that somebody has had to give me an opportunity – even to sit
in this Court, the people of Onchan had to give me an opportunity; they had to support me along
the way. And this is what this motion here today is all about. It is about identifying that section
910 of our community that desperately needs help (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) that needs that extra
push. And I am surprised that, when people turn 18, the tie is cut and people are expected to
suddenly find their own homes, they are expected to find jobs, and that is not easy.

I do wish Mr Baker very well in his endeavours and I really hope that this Committee is set up.
and it does look at this section of our community, and we do give that extra step in our society
915 for those people who are in care and may, for whatever reason their own personal
circumstances may be, that they come out of care and that there is some support there – even if
it is getting accommodation, even if it is providing references, providing further education
because at some point these individuals will come to the conclusion that they do need that
support, they do need to go back to school, they need a level of education and they do need a
920 job. So I really hope this Court supports Mr Baker's motion and I wish him well in his
endeavours.

Thank you.

Two Members: Hear, hear.

925 **The President:** I know the Court will be grateful for your contribution to this debate.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Hon. Member for Council, Mrs Hendy.

930

Mrs Hendy: Thank you, Mr President.

I again will try not to repeat too much of what has been said but we have had some amazing contributions this morning. I do welcome the motion. This addresses a problem that I think has existed for much longer than some sector of our community has been prepared to admit.

935

When I worked in local authority housing I came from what I would say is a very comfortable and privileged background, but when I went to work in social housing I was absolutely astonished at the gaps in the provision that are available out there, and especially for young, vulnerable people.

940

Vulnerability can come from a very complex and different level of backgrounds and it is not usually any blame on the individual. It can be illness, it can be family circumstances, but again I was astonished that young people were just left to disappear into this black hole at the age of 18, and sometimes younger than that, 16, and they would just disappear off the radar.

945

I think we heard alarm bells ringing yesterday in the Chief Constable's excellent report but this again is setting off alarm bells that really we need to be addressing this issue right across our Government sectors. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

950

One thing that may help – and I have already submitted my thoughts to the housing sector of the Department of Infrastructure – you can only enter on to the housing waiting list at the moment when you get to the age of 18. I feel that if an individual is able to go on to the list at 16, maybe not housed until 18, it would enable us to measure the magnitude of the housing need in that sector that we are actually unaware of. It also may help engage with that individual and let us plan for the future what we should be providing.

955

I do not think I have got much more to say except I really do welcome this motion. I wish Mr Baker and a hopeful select committee the best and I am sure they will find things that other means could not find and also have a means to explore into the wider world what other good examples there are out there. So I will be fully supporting this motion.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Hon. Member for Peel and Glenfaba, Mr Harmer.

960

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Harmer): Thank you, Mr President and thank you to the mover of this motion, which has my full support, and also for the amendment because it provides that focus, that desperate focus that we need right now.

965

I just want to echo many of the excellent comments that have been said. This is actually very much a positive motion because it affects all of Government and it affects things outside Government. From my time in Children and Families it was very clear that there was this cliff edge: when people are 16 and 18, that is it. We are limited by statutory obligations so we need to look at not just what the statutory obligations are but much wider and more into the innovation. That is why I think a select committee is absolutely perfect for this because it will take in all of the different evidence from the third sector and so forth.

970

I know from a Department point of view that there has been a lot of work in this, but we have only ever got so far and I think a committee will be really useful to actually take us to the next step. So on that I think we do need to address the cliff edges, there are so many issues.

I thank the Member for such a heartfelt speech which we are very grateful for, but we will work fully and collaboratively with the committee and wish it success.

975

Thank you.

The President: Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

980 I have not got much to say really, but what I would like to highlight is that a young person's
age in most of our legislation differs: there is a different age for health that a young person can
be seen by the Health Department and the parent does not need to know at 16, then they go
into a police situation, I think it is 18, and I think that really would be helpful to be addressed
during this debate, that we make sure all of our legislation aligns what a young person is and
985 what that age of consent is for the individuals.

Also with that in mind, vulnerable groups – we have a number of people that have perhaps
had illness or an accident and their mental capacity is perhaps at a young person's age, and I
believe there are more vulnerable groups that have a mental capacity age of a young person
that we need to consider. I know the hon. mover did state that other vulnerable groups can get
990 involved and I think that would be beneficial. But I think the biggest thing is we have got an
opportunity here to come forward with a really good policy utilising some of our brownfield
sites, and I will just finish with that one.

Thank you.

995 **The President:** Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft.

Mrs Beecroft: Thank you, Mr President.

I will be brief because I had not actually decided I was going to speak today because the
motion, I think, is pretty self-evident that it should be supported, and I congratulate the Member
1000 for bringing it forward.

However, I just wanted it recording that I congratulate Mr Callister for his contribution. It is
not often that we have the luxury of hearing directly, while we are in the middle of a debate,
from somebody who has gone through an experience like that. I know he was emotional when
he was telling us, and he made me feel emotional. I still do, I can feel a lump in my throat
1005 listening to it, but I think he was incredibly brave and I commend his courage and I thank him
very much for his contribution, I think it means a lot.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

1010 **The President:** Lord Bishop.

The Lord Bishop: Thank you, Mr President.

I think I simply wanted to say that this motion clearly meets a universally acknowledged need
and I think the things that I take from the debate this morning have to do with vision and with
1015 humanity.

So I thank the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker, for his vision in actually
addressing this issue and being able to see what needs to be done.

And I think from Mr Callister we take very much that concept of humanity. This is about a raw
matter of human lives, and when that is addressed and engaged properly, we understand also
1020 from Mr Callister's account clearly just how transformative that can be, so there is within this
the most wonderful opportunity for transforming people's lives.

So I am very pleased to support the motion and in the light of the urgency of the task, the
amendment also.

Thank you, Mr President.

1025 **The President:** Hon. Member for Garff, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr President.

1030 I rise to support Mr Baker on this excellent amendment. Mr Deputy Speaker commented on the need for a Member who worked across all Departments and to break down silos but the person who works, again, across all Departments in this context I think is the Children's Champion, but if he feels that a select committee is the best way forward, complementing the work already going on in various Departments, then I feel that we need to support him.

1035 I am very happy to support it. I have seen first-hand some of the hellholes of bedsits that young people have to live in and I think people would be arrested for keeping animals in that state, some of them ... Sorry, I did not know I was going to get emotional, I think I have been moved by Mr Callister's speech also. But it is hugely impactful on the outcome of young people's lives.

1040 I think one point I did want to make, the foster care and this cliff edge where care is stopped when people get to 18, it is the harshest thing for many people, they do not recover. They feel they are often challenging because they feel like their foster carer does not really love them, 'You are just paid to look after me.' And the fact that when that funding stops, they cannot always afford to be wonderful, voluntary, foster carers that keep in contact – and there are many who are, but the ones who rely on that income, should that young person go away to university there is no room when they get back.

1045 So I just want to say well done for bringing this motion before us today and I wish the committee all success.

Thank you.

1050 **The President:** I call on the mover to reply, Mr Baker.

Mr Baker: Thank you very much, Mr President, and thank you very much for all the contributions and the unanimity of tone amongst them all.

1055 I have got to say, Mr Callister: superb, I do not think we need to say anything more than that, that was absolutely on the money and speaking up for people who need to be spoken up for, so thank you for sharing that. That was not easy, but it made it really live. And the key thing that you said was that it was incredibly difficult to turn your life around and you could not do it on your own. That is the reality, Hon. Members. We are individuals but we live in a society. People in the past have said there is no such thing as society: that is absolute rubbish, society is what we are part of. The Isle of Man is a special society and this debate has really shown that. This is real Government for real people and we are making a real difference.

1060 The key point, as Mr Callister said, everybody needs to be believed in and everybody needs to be given a chance and that is what we are about, Hon. Members, that is why we have been put in this role. So thank you for sharing that.

1065 Going through the contributions, which I will just take a quick canter through, I obviously thank Mrs Corlett for seconding and for her supporting words.

1070 Miss Bettison, I accept your comments about the fact this is Government's responsibility but we are the parliament, we are here to hold Government to account. Government has not been doing it, which is why bringing a select committee is the right thing to do. It unlocks so many other aspects that just simply leaving it as another task on overworked Department's desks is never going to achieve. We need to go holistic, as has been acknowledged a number of times. You mentioned about the joint commissioning capability but that does not exist right now. It is an idea. It is an idea that I believe its time is coming and I do expect it to be implemented but it does not exist right now. So that is why the select committee route is the right way forward. I am happy to accept your amendment; I think it is important that we work on a timely basis.

1075 I am not going to go through everybody individually, but I just thank everybody who has spoken and supported. There were a number of themes that came out: the need for early intervention from Mr Perkins. Mr Ashford, as Health Minister, recognising the gaps and the cliff edges, and he endorsed the fact that this approach does complement what SPCC are already doing and we have got to use all the means at our disposal.

1080

Mrs Sharpe acknowledged the loneliness aspect, and that is a real issue, Hon. Members. There are a lot of lonely people in the Isle of Man; there a lot of lonely people in the British Isles. It is one of the big policy issues that we need to grasp as we move forward and we need to be careful that we do not erode society and that we always understand the social value of things that we have.

1085

My hon. friend next to me said yesterday you do not know what you have lost until it has gone. I think somebody might have said that before in a 1960s song – I think it might have been Joni Mitchell but I am not ... (**Mr Cretney:** Hear, hear.). It must be right if Mr Cretney acknowledges it! (*Laughter*)

1090

This has been a longstanding issue. I was not as long as 150 years, but Mrs Sharpe referenced that and she certainly should know from the detailed research that she has done.

Mrs Poole-Wilson has got some real experience from St Christopher's, really valuable, and there are some excellent organisations who are playing a role and have a bigger role to play going forward. That experience from the sharp end that Mrs Poole-Wilson has through her role as a St Christopher's trustee absolutely endorses the issues around the poor conditions that people are living in and the cliff edges.

1095

Dr Allinson has seen it from not only his MHK role, but also his prior career as a doctor: a really important point about planning the transition and that we need to have a systematic solution, not one that is dependent just purely on goodwill. And I thank him for his acknowledgement of the autism issue, which is one of the key groups that the motion does identify. He is absolutely right, we do need to do far better and I did notice in the Standing Committee's Report on mental health issues, the acknowledgement from the Chief Executive that there are no pathways for autism right now. That is something we need to be dealing with, there are a lot of people with autism on the Island and they need services that are very specific to their needs.

1100

1105

But, as Mr Robertshaw said, we all need services that are specific to our needs, that is what Government is here for. So we all understand the exam question; the answer is a bit more difficult, but at least if we understand the question we have got a starting point. I do believe this committee will be part of finding that solution. I hope the experience of the journey is not as painful as Mr Robertshaw's was, having come to the same point as he previously came to.

1110

He is absolutely right to highlight the need for a unified experience across all those different service lines, and he is also absolutely right to highlight the difficulty of vulnerable people in accessing Government services. One of the big issues that was talked about at the Corporate Parenting Group, which I as Children's Champion now chair, was the ability for looked-after children to complain is extremely difficult. (**Mr Robertshaw:** Hear, hear.) They know lots of individual ways of complaining but finding the right one and how to get to it – and they are very digitally enabled, but they still cannot find the right way to complain about Government services when they need to. One of the actions that was agreed at the most recent meeting was that there would be work done to find one way, one route for them to complain. The reality is we all find it difficult to engage with Government so it is, as Mr Robertshaw said, particularly difficult for those of us who are less fortunate.

1115

1120

Mr Callister, thank you again.

Mrs Hendy shared her experience from the local authority housing perspective and again, very valuable, and that insight that we have received from so many people speaking today will be a really helpful starting point for the committee when it is formed. Mrs Hendy was astonished at the gaps in provision and I think it is very easy for us to be a little bit complacent. The Isle of Man is a very special place and it is a great place to live, but there is a side to the Island where not everybody is experiencing that journey, whether it is for financial reasons, whether it is health reasons, whether it is social exclusion. As the Programme for Government identifies, we have to be inclusive and caring, and this is an extension of that. The particular points about early identification and early intervention which Mrs Hendy made, I am sure the committee will pick up.

1125

1130

1135 Thank you to Mr Harmer for his endorsements. He is right, this is not just a Department or
even a Government issue, this is a whole-Island issue and I thank you for the confirmation of DoI
support for this as probably the biggest landlord or certainly one of the biggest landlords on the
Island and with a key role in provision of housing.

1140 Ms Edge raised the point about inconsistency of young people's ages and the alignment of
Government around that, and we can look at that. She also quite rightly highlighted other
vulnerable groups and let me be really clear: the motion specifically identified two groups which
are absolutely core to my thinking as Children's Champion; I am not saying there aren't other
groups and that is why the motion was drafted as it was, to allow those other groups to come
forward. It is about young people, but it is about vulnerable young people, specifically care
leavers and those with autism.

1145 Mrs Beecroft described it as a 'self-evident' motion to support and I thank her for that.

And the Lord Bishop's endorsement was again, greatly valued and very positive comments
about the potential to be transformative here.

1150 Finally, Mrs Caine, I thank you for your support and for your reinforcement, given your
perspective from the Children's Champion role and a very poignant description of some of the
conditions that some of these young people – and not just young people – are forced to live in
and I am sure that we are going to be addressing some of these issues, not just in the committee
but elsewhere with improving where people live.

1155 So, a phenomenal contribution, a phenomenal debate, one which I think really if we are in
any doubt about how special a place this is and what we can do, I think that puts it to rest. It is a
pity Mr Hooper was not here to, I am sure, endorse it and I am sure to hear the positivity about
what we are trying to do.

So with that, Mr President, I will close, I thank everybody for their support and I beg to move.

Leave of absence granted

The President: Hon. Members, before we move to the vote, I would just advise the Court
that I have in fact given leave of absence for today's sitting to the Hon. Member for Ramsey,
Mr Hooper, who is unwell.

Accommodation for Vulnerable Young People – Select committee to investigate and report on provision – Amended motion carried; Committee of three elected

1160 **The President:** I put first of all the amendment in the name of Miss Bettison. The amendment
reads:

and that the Committee report by May 2019.

Those in favour of the amendment, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

I put the motion as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 21, Noes 0

FOR	AGAINST
Dr Allinson	None
Mr Ashford	
Mr Baker	
Mrs Beecroft	
Miss Bettison	
Mr Boot	
Mrs Caine	
Mr Callister	
Mr Cannan	
Mrs Corlett	
Mr Cregeen	
Mr Deputy Speaker	
Ms Edge	
Mr Harmer	
Mr Moorhouse	
Mr Peake	
Mr Perkins	
Mr Quayle	
Mr Shimmins	
Mr Skelly	
Mr Thomas	

1165 **The Speaker:** Mr President, in the Keys, 21 for, and none against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0

FOR	AGAINST
Miss August-Hanson	None
Mr Cretney	
Mr Crookall	
Mr Henderson	
Mrs Hendy	
The Lord Bishop	
Mrs Lord-Brennan	
Mrs Poole-Wilson	
Mrs Sharpe	

The President: And in the Council, 9 for, none against. The amended motion carries unanimously.

We move now to the election of a committee of three. May I hear nominations?
Mr Cregeen.

1170

Mr Cregeen: Thank you, Mr President.

I think an eminently suitable person – I would nominate Mr Callister, the Member for Onchan.

1175

The President: Mr Cretney.

Mr Cretney: I would like to propose the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Baker.

The President: Mr Skelly.

1180

Mr Skelly: I would like to second Mr Callister.

The President: Dr Allinson.

1185 **Dr Allinson:** I would like to second Mr Baker.

Mrs Lord-Brennan: I would like to propose the Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Sharpe.

Mr Ashford: Happy to second Mrs Sharpe, Mr President.

1190 **The President:** Miss Bettison.

Miss Bettison: Can I propose Mr Henderson.

1195 **Miss August-Hanson:** I would like to propose Mrs Caine.

The President: Mrs Caine.

Ms Edge: I would like to second Mr Henderson.

1200 **The President:** Thank you. Are there any other nominations? In that case, I call on the Clerk to read out the proposed and seconded names, please.

The Clerk: Mr President, I have the following names proposed and seconded: Mr Henderson, Mrs Sharpe, Mr Baker and Mr Callister. Mrs Caine was proposed but not seconded.

1205

The President: Thank you. We move to a vote, which will take a moment to set up.

Just a reminder that if you have voted the wrong way inadvertently, you can override by immediately pressing the other button.

1210 I would also remind you that you are required to vote yes to three people and no to one person. If you do not vote for three people, in other words, the vote will be deemed to be spoiled.

A ballot took place and electronic voting resulted as follows:

Vote Results	
Mr Callister	29
Mr Baker	28
Mrs Sharpe	22
Mr Henderson	8
Number of spoilt papers	1

Full voting results

Voting for Mr Baker

Dr Allinson
Mr Ashford
Miss August-Hanson
Mr Baker
Mrs Beecroft
Miss Bettison
Mr Boot
Mrs Caine
Mr Callister
Mr Cannan
Mrs Corlett
Mr Cregeen
Mr Cretney
Mr Crookall
Mr Deputy Speaker

Ms Edge
Mr Harmer
Mr Henderson
Mrs Hendy
Mrs Lord-Brennan
Mr Moorhouse
Mr Perkins
Mrs Poole-Wilson
Mr Quayle
Mr Shimmins
Mr Skelly
The Lord Bishop
Mr Thomas

Voting for Mr Callister

Dr Allinson
Mr Ashford
Miss August-Hanson
Mr Baker
Mrs Beecroft
Miss Bettison
Mr Boot
Mrs Caine
Mr Callister
Mr Cannan
Mrs Corlett
Mr Cregeen
Mr Cretney
Mr Crookall
Mr Deputy Speaker
Ms Edge
Mr Harmer
Mr Henderson
Mrs Hendy
Mrs Lord-Brennan
Mr Moorhouse
Mr Peake
Mr Perkins
Mrs Poole-Wilson
Mr Quayle
Mr Shimmins
Mr Skelly
The Lord Bishop
Mr Thomas

Voting for Mr Henderson

Miss Bettison
Mr Crookall
Mr Deputy Speaker
Ms Edge
Mr Henderson
Mr Peake
Mr Perkins
Mr Shimmins

Voting for Mrs Sharpe

Dr Allinson
Mr Ashford
Miss August-Hanson
Mr Baker
Mrs Beecroft
Mr Boot
Mrs Caine

Mr Callister
Mr Cannan
Mrs Corlett
Mr Cregeen
Mr Cretney
Mr Harmer
Mrs Hendy
Mrs Lord-Brennan
Mr Moorhouse
Mr Peake
Mrs Poole-Wilson
Mr Quayle
Mr Skelly
The Lord Bishop
Mr Thomas

The President: The result of the ballot: Mr Callister received 29 votes, Mr Baker received 28 votes, Mrs Sharpe received 22 votes and are therefore elected.

Thank you, Hon. Members.

**20. Syrian refugees –
Select committee to investigate Isle of Man’s acceptance –
Debate commenced**

The Hon. Member for Garff (Mrs Caine) to move:

That a Tynwald Select Committee of three members be appointed to investigate the practical advantages and disadvantages of the Isle of Man’s accepting refugees from Syria; what facilities would be required on the Isle of Man to enable participation in the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme; and to report.

1215 **The President:** We turn to Item 20, Syrian refugees. I call on the Hon. Member for Garff, Mrs Caine, to move.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr President.

1220 I bring this motion before this Hon. Court fully aware that it is a divisive one for our Island. I bring it fully in the knowledge that certain social media commentators suggest that my doing so, doing anything that in any way increases the possibility of bringing Syrian refugees to our Island, is to commit political suicide. I hope that is not the general view.

1225 We are not elected just to make the easy decisions; we also need sometimes to grapple with less comfortable considerations, to act according to our conscience and political beliefs. I also firmly believe that the Isle of Man is overall a generous, welcoming and compassionate place, as borne out by our treatment of enemy aliens during the wars. I believe the majority of people are horrified by the plight of the Syrian people and would wish their Government, their parliament, to assist in the best way possible.

1230 For the avoidance of doubt, I am not seeking the support of Hon. Members to bring vulnerable refugees to the Isle of Man. My motion seeks simply to establish a select committee to investigate the practical advantages and disadvantages of the Island’s accepting refugees from Syria, to establish what facilities would be required on the Isle of Man to enable participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme – so more of a feasibility study on the possibility of a small number Syrian refugees being resettled here. And of course it would need to establish whether or not resettlement in the Isle of Man for those Syrians would be in the best interest of those refugees.

1235

1240 In his response to my Question tabled in September, the Chief Minister detailed the Cabinet Office considerations into the Isle of Man taking part in the Syrian Vulnerable Refugee Resettlement Programme. In February 2016 they concluded we did not have the specialist support required and continued to provide financial aid via the former International Development Committee. The subject was revisited in January 2017 when the Hon. Member Mr Quayle accepted a petition signed by more than a thousand residents. That resulted in more funding being allocated, bringing the Isle of Man's contribution to the UNHCR to a total of £1.5 million since the conflict began.

1245 I am grateful for the information that the Isle of Man donation has provided a vital lifeline for 30,250 refugees in Jordan and Lebanon. It states that 2,000 Syrian refugee families received cash assistance, meaning those families no longer have to choose between buying food, paying rent or buying essential medicine; 750 Syrian refugee families received emergency shelter kits and 1,100 families also received winter survival kits including blankets, heating stoves and a four-month supply of gas. That is all very laudable and positive, but surely a drop in the ocean for the UNHCR and for the millions of displaced Syrians who have no hope of returning to their ruined country.

1255 The fact is the Syrian civil war has been ongoing since 2011 and has created the biggest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Half a million civilians have died. More than six million are displaced within Syria, whilst almost five million have fled the country, with the vast majority ending up in huge refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt. The conditions in many of these camps are desperate and, despite huge amounts of foreign aid, they cannot cope with the magnitude of the crisis, particularly as these camps are in relatively poor countries with severe needs for their own populations.

1260 Many European states have closed their borders, although others such as Sweden and Germany have been more welcoming. The UN Refugee Agency advocated that 10% of the five million people in the Middle Eastern camps should be resettled in a third country, particularly the most vulnerable. Countries around the world pledged to resettle nearly 250,000, half of the estimated target. In 2015 the UK government committed to accept 20,000 people over five years from the Middle Eastern camps, and by the end of 2017 a total of 8,000 had arrived under this Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

1265 The possibility of the Isle of Man accepting 25 vulnerable Syrian refugees, just a handful of families, would be in proportion to the UK's 20,000 target, although the UK are currently behind the target to resettle that many by 2020. Acknowledging the Isle of Man has now allocated significant international development funding through the Cabinet Office, I still question why couldn't the Isle of Man do more – we are talking about 10% of the most vulnerable refugees. What do we see the Island becoming in the 21st century? Do we think we should step up and meet our international obligations, or do we agree with the Chief Minister, again in September's response, stating:

The Isle of Man is an internally self-governing British Crown Dependency, not a sovereign state, and the United Kingdom is responsible for our international obligations.

1275 I do not agree. Surely the Isle of Man has to be responsible for its own international obligations.

1280 At this point, I feel we should also consider the latest UK Parliament response on this subject. When Lord Dubs tabled a question last month querying what discussions the UK government had had with Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man over the possibility of the Crown Dependencies taking refugees, Baroness Williams of Trafford replied:

In the early stages of developing the UK's response to the refugee crisis, conversations were held between the UK Government and the Crown Dependencies to explore whether the infrastructure and capacity existed in the Crown Dependencies to support the resettlement of refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Any offers of capacity and support for the UK schemes now or in the future are welcome.

So it seems they would welcome any offers of capacity and support. That does not suggest that they determine the Crown Dependencies' international obligations and whether we can meet them – not at all, they would welcome any offers of capacity and support for the UK vulnerable refugee resettlement programmes.

1285 In Lord Dubs we have a living example of someone whose life of public service has been given to the country which took him in as a six-year-old refugee from Prague. While I would be happy to see our international aid budget directly benefiting vulnerable refugees to start a new, safe life in the Isle of Man, it should not be assumed that refugees remain a burden on their host country for years. It they do not return home it is highly likely and evidenced elsewhere that
1290 they become economic contributors for their host country. Of course people would prefer to stay close to home or to return to their native country, but if that is not possible most simply want a safe place to live and raise their family. As we know, the Isle of Man is very safe. From the Island's perspective, we also want young economically active people to come to support the Manx economy. Many Syrians are highly educated and will almost certainly find jobs once any
1295 medical or language issues have been overcome.

In the EU remain/leave debate it was argued that free movement of labour in the EU had supplied the UK and the Isle of Man with younger economically active people who are more likely to work in our hospitals and care homes. Why wouldn't Syrian families equally bring a significant economic benefit, once settled, if that does prove to be possible and found to be in
1300 theirs and the Island's best interests?

The matter was the subject of a motion at Junior Tynwald last year, which was again divided but narrowly supported the view that the Isle of Man should be taking in Syrian refugees. In bringing the motion, Mr Joe Johnson at Junior Tynwald 2017 made the point that Government providing £1 million is a very effective method and he was sure that poor souls surviving in such
1305 horrific circumstances – he said, I emphasise, 'surviving' rather than living, because there is no way sleeping in tents and being in fear for your future could possibly be considered living – are very grateful for such heroic and generous action. The heartfelt speeches, passion and compassion displayed in the Junior Tynwald debate is something we could all learn from.

Since tabling the motion I have been delighted by the number of students and young people
1310 who have written to me on this issue, all strongly in favour of the Isle of Man stepping up its response. There are many who will be listening and watching today to hear Members' views on this motion.

It should be noted that the response to the international appeal to resettle vulnerable Syrian refugees has been very mixed across the United Kingdom. BBC news reported in April that
1315 although the UK has accepted more than 10,000 Syrian refugees in the past two and a half years, analysis by the BBC showed large disparities in the numbers going to different parts of the country. Scotland has taken four times as many Syrian refugees as Greater London, while Northern Ireland has taken over 300 more than the east of England. That was back in April. Relative to their populations, northern England had taken over twice as many Syrian refugees as
1320 the south and, overall, almost a third of local authorities were still to take any Syrian refugees.

I recently met with the Red Cross Isle of Man service manager and he tells me that to date, since 2015, Northern Ireland has accepted 238 families, comprising 1,181 individuals. Their target by the end of the scheme is 2,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees. Perhaps there would be some ability for the Isle of Man to link with the Northern Ireland resettlement programme and
1325 for the authorities there to assist in bringing carefully vetted refugees to the Isle of Man. A Select Committee could investigate and establish the facts. My question for Hon. Members to consider, Mr President, is that if Northern Ireland can accommodate vulnerable refugees, if the Isle of Bute and other Scottish islands have successfully resettled refugees along with parts of Cumbria, surely we should look at how they have accomplished it and how the Island could
1330 accommodate some refugees.

I must emphasise that I strongly believe bringing vulnerable refugees should not disadvantage Island residents on housing waiting lists or in any other way. The two matters are

1335 separate. The Isle of Man, as the eighth richest nation in the world, really needs to look at our social policies and see how we are meeting the needs and aspirations of our residents along with meeting our international obligations. There is a lot of work ongoing with the Poverty Committee and the Hungry and Homeless initiative by Government. There is also the excellent previous motion that will enable a Committee to focus on a particularly necessary social issue, the accommodation for young people. Giving consideration to our international obligations must happen in tandem with the focus on domestic issues.

1340 I am grateful to a number of Manx residents who have recent experience of refugee camps and who continue to work to alleviate suffering, most recently providing winter coats and other essential supplies to the camps. Hearing their first-hand experiences and the belief that the Isle of Man could and should do more than contribute to the United Nations international appeal has prompted this motion.

1345 Mr President, I beg to move.

The President: Hon. Member, Miss Bettison.

Miss Bettison: Thank you, Mr President.

1350 I rise today to second the motion in the name of Mrs Caine. I have followed the debate on whether we should look to offer a place of refuge to those fleeing terror in their home country of Syria for some time now, as I suspect we all have.

1355 I would like to share a story with you, a story of a young family who find themselves living in a war zone with bombs going off around them and in fear for their safety. They travel overland and by fishing boat in desperation to reach the safety of a refugee camp. On arrival at the camp they receive camp-issued identification cards containing their personal details, their skills and their education level. They are put through medical inspections and assigned to living quarters for families. They receive rations of food and those that have a little money purchase a few extra treats. They take on roles working within the camp and also take the opportunity to learn new skills from other refugees. Some train as nurses and use the practical skills they obtain to care for other refugees. The children are put into school sessions run by the Red Cross and some form of structure is reintroduced into their short, thus far chaotic, lives. The family want only to return to a regular life; if that can be back in the place where they called home, then great, but if not, to integrate into a new country and be allowed the opportunity to contribute to society.

1365 The experience I described was representative of Greek families seeking refuge in Syria during the Second World War, but their story is so familiar to that of British refugees who fled to the countryside, Jewish refugees treated as enemy aliens fleeing to the Isle of Man, Burmese families fleeing to Bangladesh and Syrian refugees now fleeing to safety across the world. Most countries in history have spent some time seeking refuge and some time acting as host.

1370 Throughout the ongoing debate as to how we should play our role I have been devastated to read some of the comments on social media, sweeping statements about refugees, about Syrians and about the wider Middle Eastern community. We have refugees living on our Island and nationals from many of the countries in the Middle East. In fact, I have been privileged to meet people from so many backgrounds throughout my life and I am honoured to call them my friends. To those who have cast broad criticism of all Syrians I say: not in my name. To those who have cast broad criticism of all refugees I say: not in my name. To those who say that we must look after our own first, I say the two are not mutually exclusive. **(Two Members: Hear, hear.)** Many of those I have spoken to who work with our excellent local homeless charities are in support of welcoming refugees. Many of those I have spoken to who have experienced homelessness, mental ill health and times of desperation are in support of welcoming refugees. They understand how it feels to be in such desperate need for help and not know who to turn to.

1380 In 2015 the Icelandic author Bryndis Bjorgvinsdottir wrote an open letter about the human resources that are refugees. The words resounded with me then and still do now: they are our

1385 future spouses, best friends, our next soulmate, a drummer for our children's school band, our
next colleague, Miss Iceland 2022, the carpenter who finally finishes our bathroom project, the
cook in the cafeteria, a fireman or a television host; people to whom we will never be able to say
in the future, 'Your life is worth less than mine.' Who are we to judge which person is worth
more or which career makes us more valuable as a human being?

1390 I am not so arrogant as to presume that we have all the facilities needed to provide for
refugees, but I believe we are premature in making the decision that we are unable to assist in
the resettlement of Syrian refugees. I have seen no evidence to show that we are unable to
support the resettlement scheme for vulnerable Syrian refugees, only broad sweeping
1395 statements and assumption. At the very least we need to explore further in an open, honest and
transparent way what resources would be needed to assist in this humanitarian crisis and how
we can most effectively help this group of desperate people, of fathers, mothers, nurses,
teachers, children, babies, but above all of fellow human beings.

I beg to second.

1400 **The President:** I call on the Hon. Member for Middle, the Chief Minister, Mr Quayle.

The Chief Minister (Mr Quayle): Thank you, Mr President, and I thank the Hon. Members for
their comments to date.

1405 The plight of the Syrian refugees, and indeed the plight of refugees from many corners of the
world, is quite frankly absolutely shocking and I would challenge anyone watching the news
coverage to feel otherwise.

As an internationally responsible and caring Island, I firmly believe that we have a duty to
play our part in helping the many vulnerable people who are facing a terrible situation caused by
war, famine or other disasters in their home countries. The issue that perhaps divides us,
1410 though, is how we the Island can provide the most effective support to those caught up in these
dreadful circumstances.

As Hon. Members are aware, both the previous administration and this administration have
given detailed consideration to the Isle of Man taking Syrian refugees as part of the UK
Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. As the decision to accept and
1415 set the criteria under which refugees can be accepted is a matter for the sovereign state, the Isle
of Man does not have the legal authority or mechanisms to determine its own scheme for
accepting refugees, and so the Island is unable to accept refugees by any means other than
through the United Kingdom scheme.

This scheme draws on the UK's significant experience of resettling vulnerable people and
1420 existing domestic resettlement mechanisms and aims to resettle those in desperate need of
assistance. This includes women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care and
survivors of torture and violence who cannot be effectively supported in their region of origin.
Participants in the scheme are identified in Syria by the United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees (UNCHR), based on criteria from the UK government. Refugees are then placed with
1425 local authorities which have volunteered to be part of the scheme and have the adequate
infrastructure and the ability to accommodate refugees with all degrees of vulnerability. I should
add that local authorities are unable to select the candidates they wish to resettle. The UK's
Department for International Development and Her Majesty's Treasury provide funding to local
authorities to support them to deliver this. It is important to note that the Isle of Man would not
1430 be entitled to any funding from the UK Resettlement Scheme or from the UK government. Any
cost incurred on the Island to provide the relevant services would have to be found from within
our existing budget.

Both administrations carefully considered whether the Island had the necessary and essential
capability to provide the equality of care available in the UK required by refugees to rebuild
1435 independent lives. The Council of Ministers gave particular attention to the ability to provide
public housing, social security, healthcare and education to support the most vulnerable

1440 refugees, some of which would require legislative changes in order to remove the existing residential qualifications to allow refugees to access these services. After having considered these matters, the Council of Ministers on both occasions determined the Isle of Man was not able to participate in the scheme, as the supporting infrastructure required was not fully in place to meet the specific needs of those vulnerable Syrian refugees whom the UK is seeking to resettle.

1445 I should also add that if the Island were to make special provision for Syrian refugees, it could also be open to challenge from other refugees from different countries who could claim, with some justification, that they were being discriminated against if they were not granted the same special provisions as given to Syrian refugees. For example, I am just going to give a list of countries where we have refugees from, coming to all countries of the world: Afghanistan – 2.6 million – South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Ukraine, Libya, Pakistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Venezuela, Yemen, Burundi, Columbia and Nigeria, just to name a few.

1450 The Council of Ministers did, though, look at other ways to ensure that the Island could continue to play its part in helping to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis and other international humanitarian crises. Both the current and previous Council of Ministers agreed that the most effective and efficient way for the Island to provide help to the greatest number of refugees was by directing funds to charities and organisations working in the affected regions to address the specific needs of the affected population as quickly as possible. In addition, by providing funding to charities and organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Island is helping people rebuild their lives as close to home as possible.

1455 We have received a report, which can be found on the Isle of Man Government website, from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, into the benefits of everything that money from the people of the Isle of Man has done to help – and I am glad the Hon. Member for Garff mentioned them – the 30,250 people. To date, the Isle of Man Government has provided approximately £1.5 million to support Syrian refugees from the Island's International Development Scheme. This has provided a vital lifeline for over 30,250 Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon – and that is not just for one year, that is nearly three years going forward too; and the Hon. Member Mrs Caine did in fact raise this, but I just wanted to reiterate cash assistance provided to 2,000 Syrian refugee families in Jordan, enabling them to stay warm and protected – that is 10,000 people at a total cost of £278,000 per annum; shelter kits distributed to 750 Syrian refugee families – that is 3,750 people helped at a cost of £161,000; winter clothes, including undergarments, provided to 1,100 families in Jordan and Lebanon – 5,500 people, 1,100 households; high-thermal blankets provided to 1,100 families in Jordan and Lebanon – 5,500 people; and heating stoves provided to 1,100 families in Jordan and Lebanon, again a total of 5,500 people. That is how we come up with the total that our money has helped, for three years: 30,250 people.

1470 Giving you an example of where the cash assistance goes, in Jordan – and again I thank the Hon. Member for Garff for raising this, but I will reiterate it because she did miss off a little bit – the cash assistance programme provides a vital lifeline for around 32,000 vulnerable Syrian families each year. Cash grants enable them to stay in their homes and care for their families, as well as to pay their rent, which costs, on average, US\$183 per month. Thanks to cash grants, families do not have to choose between buying food, paying the rent or getting essential medicine. This financial support also prevents refugees from having to resort to dangerous or illegal work such as selling sex to survive, or children from having to work in exploitative conditions to keep a roof over their heads.

1480 By way of comparison, based on UK financial estimates, if 25 refugees had been resettled in the United Kingdom this would be in the region of £1.6 million, so we have invested £1.5 million to help over 30,000 people for the same amount as helping 25 people. And so a similar figure can be estimated for the Isle of Man because we would have to comply with the rules and regulations laid down that we have to provide funding for a five-year period, where we cannot

1490 take into account any donations or people volunteering free. There is a set formula that we
would have to follow through the UK scheme. Furthermore, the policy adopted of providing
funding to charities and organisations working in the affected region means that the Island's
support is extended to all refugees. By way of an example, since the crisis in Myanmar in 2017
the Isle of Man has donated £440,000 to the Rohingya Muslims forced to leave everything
behind and flee their homes.

1495 If I just come to a couple of the comments that the Hon. Member, Mrs Caine, is asking in her
speech, she asked ... As I have said numerous times, the previous administration looked into this
and this administration has looked into this. I was disappointed that Mrs Caine felt it was a drop
in the ocean – and that was a quote she gave – helping 30,000 and £1.5 million was a drop in the
ocean; I think substantial help from the Isle of Man. But the way she was speaking she would
1500 have us not giving the aid to the 30,250 but spending the same money on 25 people.

Mrs Caine goes on to question our constitutional relationship. That was clear and I just have
to disagree with her on that, but our colleagues in the other Crown Dependencies, Jersey and
Guernsey, have come to exactly the same conclusion as ourselves. We are not on our own on
this one.

1505 Highly educated Syrians would bring a lot to the Island, says Mrs Caine, the Hon. Member for
Garff, and I am sure they would but we cannot cherry pick who we take. I alluded to that earlier
on in the speech. And would we want to deprive the country of Syria when it is rebuilding by
taking all their doctors, consultants, nurses, teachers and professors, etc? I do not believe we
would. I am led to believe, though I did not hear it myself, that the Red Cross representative at
1510 the time of the initial decision stated on our local radio station that the administration had made
the right decision – that is the Isle of Man Government – and Mrs Caine mentioned she had
been speaking to the Red Cross.

Miss Bettison, the Hon. Member for Douglas East, gave us a story of a family from Syria and
Greece, and I have no reason to doubt her words. This is a really tough decision; it is not
1515 something we have taken lightly. Where I can agree with Miss Bettison wholeheartedly is that I
have also been upset by comments made by some people on social media, and the letters I have
received, and emails, supporting my action. We made the decision not based on those views but
on the facts that I am given. We have made the decision based on what is right for the people of
Syria. Helping 30,000 is ... It is a tough decision, but I hope for all the reasons that I have given ...

1520 Mr President, the commitment of the Council of Ministers to ensuring the Island continues to
provide support to refugees across the world remains resolute, but as I have already said, the
Council of Ministers has given full and very careful consideration to this matter and so I cannot
support the Hon. Member's motion.

1525 **The President:** Hon. Member for Middle, Mr Shimmins.

Mr Shimmins: Thank you, Mr President.

1530 I would like to commend the Hon. Member for Garff for having the courage to bring forward
(**A Member:** Yes.) what is clearly a difficult subject and a divisive topic. I admire her
determination to try and do the right thing.

I am afraid I disagree with my hon. colleague from Middle on this particular subject. I would
refer Members to the motion. The motion actually is to investigate the practical advantages and
disadvantages. Effectively it is exploring the art of the possible, Hon. Members. It is not asking
for firm commitment, as potentially might be being suggested. It feels the sensible thing to do. It
1535 feels the right thing to do. Not to do so feels blinkered and, in my view, closed minded. I do not
think it sends out a positive message about our Island nation.

Mrs Caine touched on Scotland, which is the land of my birth, although I have not lived there
for many years. Their experience and their approach to refugees I think is quite interesting. As
Mrs Caine said, Scotland took a much higher proportion of UK refugees than many other areas

1540 and they are proud of that. Let me just read out for you the Scottish government's official policy on refugees, which is headed up 'Scotland welcomes refugees':

Scotland is dedicated to being a good global citizen and to doing everything possible to make our world a better place. One way that we are working with our neighbours around the world is in helping with the current humanitarian crisis. Scotland is warmly welcoming refugees and we are playing a critical role in ensuring these displaced families have a new place to call home and a chance to start over again.

So I listened to the Chief Minister's very long list of reasons why this is not possible, why we cannot help and lots of reasons not to do anything in terms of helping bring refugees here, and then I compared that to the experience of another island, which is the Isle of Bute. Hon.
1545 Members might not be familiar with the Isle of Bute. It is a beautiful place. It is very similar in many ways to the Isle of Man, a bit smaller but it has a wonderful environment and some lovely beaches. It has a population of 6,500 people at the moment, roughly, and that population was enhanced by 24 families who fled their homeland in terror. The population of that island welcomed these 24 families – not 25 people, 24 families, so that is family units with children,
1550 and since then children have been born to these families; four children were born this year. That was not viewed as a strain; that was celebrated by the people in the Isle of Bute.

If you have been to the Isle of Bute and you compare the Isle of Bute with the Isle of Man and the facilities that they have, when we say we cannot cope, we cannot give the facilities, I would encourage anybody, including the Council of Ministers, to go and have a look at the Isle of Bute
1555 and then come and tell me why we cannot and they can. For me, it just does not stack up. As you can probably tell, I am supportive of Mrs Caine's motion.

Before I leave the Scottish experience, Scotland is a very proud place as well. In many ways it is similar. It is run by the Scottish Nationalist Party. They perhaps have a slightly different view of what nationalism means to some people who live here, and they view that it should be inclusive,
1560 not exclusive, that it should be progressive with an international perspective. I think we can learn from that approach and I think we can do better than what I have just heard.

Thank you very much. I will be supporting the motion.

The President: Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft.
1565

Mrs Beecroft: Thank you, Mr President.

It seems to be a morning for congratulating people for their bravery and their courage, because I certainly do congratulate the mover for her bravery and courage in bringing this forward. I hope she is prepared for the flak and the comments that she is going to get, because I
1570 can assure you it is very unpleasant. When this issue first arose there was a lot on Facebook about it and people saying we would never find anybody to take these refugees into their homes etc. My husband and I put our names down publicly and said if they come here we would, and the abuse and some of the comments ... I turned off the notifications because it was making me so angry and, to be honest, so ashamed that people were talking about these refugees as if they
1575 were not human, as if they did not need help, as if they did not need support. I do hope that it is a very small section of our community who would feel that way, because it is quite shameful. So I do hope that the mover is as strong as she says she is at the beginning because she will need to be.

For me this is a head versus heart matter. My head says this is exactly what we should be doing. That is why we put our names down publicly, to lead by example and say this is what we
1580 should be doing, we should be helping these people. But when I was in the Council of Ministers – and I was a Minister when this issue was raised – and we heard all the evidence there, my head said actually the money that is being spent is probably being put to better use and helping more people. I do not count the 30,000 the Chief Minister said, because they were not getting the same quality – you are being given a blanket as opposed to being given a home. That is a very
1585 different matter. You are not comparing apples with apples; you are comparing two very

different things. But the arguments I heard when I was in the Council of Ministers did persuade me that we were doing the right thing by sending the money to help the people rather than bringing them here and spending it on them.

1590 However, since I left the Council of Ministers I have heard arguments the other way. I find myself getting pulled in both directions, I suppose depending on which bit of me is being ruled at the time. You cannot disassociate your emotions from these things; it is absolutely impossible. If you just listen to your emotions, you say yes, bring them here, it is exactly what we should be doing. That still stands today, but what I do not know is whether we are doing the right thing from a financial perspective and from their point of view, and I think this is what I would like to ...

I would love to support this motion, but I would like some assurance from the mover before I commit to doing that. The motion says that three Members be appointed to investigate the practical advantages and disadvantages of the Isle of Man's accepting refugees from Syria. 1600 Which point of view is that investigation going to be from? Is it going to be advantages and disadvantages for the Island, for people who live here now? Or is it going to be the advantages and disadvantages from the refugees' perspective? Or is it going to be from both? So I would like a bit of clarity on that, please.

I think it boils down to this for me: we have to know what is in the best interests of the refugees from Syria and that is what I would hope that the committee is going to investigate. 1605 What is in their best interests and what is the best way that the money that we are currently using ...? Are we using it to the best advantage for them? The motion does not quite spell it out. I would very much like some assurances and some more clarity, if the mover would not mind in her summing up, and then I can make up my mind which way to vote on this. And it is a very important and very serious matter, so I hope she will be able to do that for me. 1610

Thank you.

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Miss August-Hanson.

1615 **Miss August-Hanson:** Thank you, Mr President.

Yesterday we agreed to a £1.5 million spend on another matter – for the DoI to spend on the reconstruction of Strathallan horse tram depot.

Can we not do more than what we have done already? It is 25 people. This is an opportunity to be able to help directly on a one-on-one basis, bravely. Approximately 30,000 people – that is wonderful news. I commend the decision to send it; truly I do, genuinely, and I did at the time. 1620

If we are truly committed to play our part in the international response, then why can't we find a way to work around the lack of legal-authority mechanisms that are currently in place to unilaterally accept refugees? Why can't we find a way to talk our way around that to see if there is anything further that can be done, or at least look into it? It is 25 people. I do believe that this is our international responsibility. We should be putting ourselves out there. There is no reason as to why not, really, in terms of researching it at least. It is time that we took a stand on it, more so than just providing money. We keep saying this is a special place to live and work, that this is a caring and inclusive society; we are rolling out an Equality Act. So let's not just put money to the problem; let's at least look at doing more, if we can, just to see if we can. 1625

I do support the motion. I agree to an extent with what the Chief Minister said regarding nurses and doctors. There will be a time when Syria is finding its feet again and at that time they will need doctors, they will need nurses, they will need people with professions to work their way through. So at least perhaps what I would like to see here is, should this motion be successful, that we look into advocacy and what we can do in that particular area. 1630

I have got a story that is in front of me right now – and it is on the website of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) – and I would just like to read it, if you will indulge me. You may have already read it before, I do not know. 1635

It has been just over a year since Mahmoud and his family were resettled in the small town of Torsby in central Sweden. Coming here was a dream come true for this young Syrian boy, who – like so many of his generation – suffered the traumas of war only to discover that life in exile often presents new perils.

After fleeing Syria with his family, Mahmoud spent two years in Egypt. Unable to attend school, he was mostly stuck at home. When he ventured outside, other boys in his neighbourhood bullied him repeatedly for being Syrian. When the family decided to send Mahmoud alone on an illegal boat bound for Italy, Mahmoud's suffering only increased. Within hours, the boat was shot at and Mahmoud was sent to detention. It was days before he was released.

But Mahmoud doesn't like to look back, for the past is still too painful to recall. He is determined to make the most of all that is on offer in his new life in Sweden. In just one year, he has learnt to speak Swedish fluently, has made a name for himself on the football field and is now trying his hand at ice hockey.

Mahmoud has also earned the respect of his classmates and teacher, who no longer see him as 'the Syrian refugee'. To them, he is quite simply Mahmoud, just another boy in the class. And that is exactly what Mahmoud dreams of – the chance to live a normal childhood once more.

I will leave you with that, but I do support, very much so, the motion and the bravery of Mrs Caine in bringing it.

1640 Thank you, Mr President.

The President: I just take the opportunity to remind Hon. Members of the provisions of Standing Order 3.23(7), which says:

Unless it is of such a nature that its publication would be inconsistent with the public interest, no document may be referred to until a copy has been distributed to all Members.

1645 This is not always observed but the same matter would extend to items online that are being quoted from. They really should be circulated in advance. That is what the Standing Order says.

Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Ashford.

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Ashford): Thank you, Mr President, and bearing that in mind I will keep my remarks generalised.

1650 It is following on from the Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft. I agree with much of what she has said. I know it is something that always provokes passionate debate, particularly when we are referring to refugees, some of whom have been through absolutely heart-wrenching experiences. You do not have to dig very far to find absolutely dreadful stories, horrendous stories of horrendous things that these people have been through, but one of the things I am not hearing a lot of – I have heard various references and the Hon. Member for
1655 Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft, mentioned it – is that what we need to look at is not just what the Island can support but also doing what is right for the refugees themselves.

At the moment, I am still not convinced that the relocation is the right thing here in the Island because ... and again I do not want to breach what you have just said about the Standing Order,
1660 Mr President, but again you do not have to look far at the scheme provided in the UK to actually find out that one of the big things that the scheme pushes on is the fact of having capacity and provision in education, health and social care sectors to be able to treat people locally who have been through the most horrendous experiences and who require a lot of support and help. A lot of the people and the situations that those refugees will be suffering from, if that was someone
1665 in the local population we would be sending them into the UK for treatment because it cannot be provided locally for the size we are. It would be the same situation for any refugees that come in and I am not sure that is in their best interests. They also look at the support infrastructure that is in place, and again, having read through it, I am not convinced the Island would meet those criteria. But also one of the things that refugees need is certainty and the UK
1670 scheme, as it stands, does not give that certainty because they do not have indefinite leave to remain. Under the UK scheme it is five years. They have five years, so there is no guarantee after that five-year-period is up that they will be given leave to remain. So it leads to uncertainty.

1675 Both the hon. mover, Mrs Caine ... Firstly, I have got to say I congratulate her on bringing it forward. I think she has had the courage to do that and, like other Members who have spoken, I have been quite shocked at some of the comments that have come forward outside this Hon. Court about why this should be refused, and I do not share those views.

1680 Both she and the Hon. Member for Middle, Mr Shimmins, referred to the Isle of Bute. Mr Shimmins is quite correct, there are 24 families that were relocated there and in fact, as of the end of last year, there were four babies that have now been born to refugee families and there have been many that have settled successfully, but again you do not have to dig far under the radar to find there are also individuals where it has not worked. There are instances in the Isle of Bute of increased oppression, feelings of isolation, exclusion from the community and even in one case, unfortunately, an attempted suicide. That is from the refugees themselves. There are some refugees who find the island wonderful and feel they have got the support, but
1685 equally it is a mixed picture and I think we do need to bear that in mind. If you look further afield to other island nations that have taken in refugees ... For instance, even go right round the world to the island of Nauru, not far off Australia, they have taken in Iranian refugees, particularly children, and the experience has been that the children have suffered more problems since they have been there and there have actually been legal cases there to get the children relocated into
1690 Australia. Again, from the studies I have looked at – Mr President, again bearing in mind your ruling on circulating documents – what I can say to Hon. Members is the more I dig at it the more I tend to find that there are feelings of isolation in small island communities, that they feel there is not that big a support network there for them.

1695 From my point of view, what is important in all of this is not what makes us feel good as an Island, not what makes us feel we are meeting our international obligations, but what is right for those refugees and those people who have suffered these absolutely dreadful experiences that you would not wish on anyone in this entire world. That is the position I am coming from, and at the moment I just am not convinced that we would be doing the best thing by those refugees.

**Procedural –
Motion carried to continue sitting to complete Item 20**

1700 **The President:** Now, Hon. Members, I seek your guidance. I have three more Hon. Members on my list before I call on Mrs Caine to sum up. Is it your wish that we carry on or resume at 2.30?

Mr Cregeen.

1705 **Mr Cregeen:** Mr President, I move that we continue to the end of this Item.

The President: Complete the debate, in other words?

Mr Ashford: I beg to second, Mr President.

1710 **The President:** Is that agreed, Hon. Members, to complete the debate? (**Members:** Agreed.) Members will bear in mind the hour in their contributions.

**Syrian refugees –
Debate continued –
Motion lost**

The President: Mr Robertshaw, Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

1715 Sometimes politics is very hard, and this is one of those occasions. I will not be voting for the motion and I think I have got a duty to explain my position, to stand up and say what I believe.

1720 I absolutely understand the sentiment, the passion and the heartfelt views that the mover has and I respect that absolutely. I think the motion is misplaced. It says that a Tynwald select committee should look at the practical advantages or disadvantages. It is much deeper than that. That is subordinate to a much more fundamental principle, which is: is it right or is it wrong to bring refugees to the Isle of Man?

1725 I went through this debate in a rather unusual position some few years ago. My wife and I decided that we would have a holiday in what was the Austro-Hungarian Empire. We wanted to go from capital to capital to see how the First World War felt for the people in those nations. What happened was we were going through Munich station and it coincided with the arrival of 18,000 refugees that day. Imagine the impact of that on you as you thought you were just looking at something else historical. For me, the debate that we are having now took place between myself, my wife and a German couple as we sat in a café. You know how good the Germans are – they can speak English brilliantly. We were discussing what we had just
1730 experienced and the Germans piped up and we had an hour-long discussion as to why we ‘British’, as they saw us, were being insensitive to refugees and that ‘we Germans’ were ‘opening our doors’. That was where really I formed my views around this and have thought, obviously, a lot about it since.

1735 What is happening in Syria is horrendous, what is happening to many of the people there is horrendous, but there is another day to dawn in the future and hopefully very soon – and if not very soon, then hopefully as soon as possible – Syria will find peace again. It has to be rebuilt as a nation and we all have to engage in that process in whatever way we can. In the meantime, there are millions of people vacating those dangerous and horrendous circumstances and sitting in refugee camps in the peripheral region. The UK has done a huge amount itself and the Isle of
1740 Man has contributed, as the Chief Minister has said, to the process of trying to look after those refugees as best we can, and more needs to be done in terms of keeping those children educated, and healthcare facilities, so when Syria can put itself back together again the people are there to make it happen.

1745 I do not take the view that we can deal with this issue by exception – because that is what we are discussing here, a few refugees coming to the Isle of Man is by exception. The rule is that we all have a duty of care to rebuild Syria, to help people rebuild their lives, and the best way we can do that is concentrate an awful lot more on the refugee camps and making them as human and as bearable as possible, particularly with regard to education and health. There are significant omissions there and I think the Chief Minister is completely right where we have got
1750 to examine how best we can spend our money, not make ourselves – I am sorry to say this – feel good about ourselves because we have done a particular thing. We do not count here and our feelings do not count. What matters is what is right for the Syrian refugees, and my view is that the Isle of Man is taking the correct approach and we need to think about perhaps doing more down that route. It is not for us to feel better about this.

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The President: Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Mr President, all really, I think, through the debate today what we are seeing is that there are different views within the Chamber from all hon. colleagues, and therefore I feel it is

1760 crucial that we do set up this committee so that we can have all of these views, all of the
concerns ... we can have more facts in front of us before any decision is reached.

The Hon. Member for Garff said we are not elected to make easy decisions. We are not, but I
think we are elected to make decisions with the right information in front of us, and I do not feel
that I have enough of that information at present, so therefore I will be supporting a committee
1765 being set up.

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Sharpe.

Mrs Sharpe: Thank you, Mr President.

1770 I do not know how it feels to be a Syrian refugee but I do know how it felt to be alone in a
foreign country with no family or friends when I bought a one-way ticket to go teaching in Japan
aged 21.

Living and working as a foreign immigrant is one of the hardest things I have ever done. The
first thing I had to do on arrival was to go to the police station to have my fingerprints taken, and
1775 this was then put on what was known as an alien registration card, along with a drop of my
blood which showed which blood type I belong to. It had my photograph on and I had to carry it
with me everywhere I went. As well as the homesickness, the sense of displacement and a loss
of identity, I experienced how it feels to be prejudged purely on the colour of your skin and the
shape of your face, and it was not uncommon when going out at night to try and get into
1780 nightclubs and find signs saying 'No foreigners'.

I am not equating my experience with that of refugees, but what I am saying is that I
sympathise with people who find themselves alone and far from home. For the first three
months I did not meet another British person, but one of my students was kind and friendly, and
looking forward to the weekly one-on-one lesson I had with this student got me through the first
1785 few months. All you need is one friend and there are people in the Isle of Man who want to
support Syrian refugees and welcome them into their own homes to be a friend.

Mr President, I will be supporting this motion to investigate whether the Isle of Man can
provide practical face-to-face friendship for these people.

Thank you.

1790

The President: Hon. Member, Mr Cannan.

The Minister for the Treasury (Mr Cannan): Thank you very much, Mr President.

I think, like everybody, there is not one person in here who does not recognise the terrible
1795 situation and the environment in which the refugees from Syria find themselves; and, seeing as
we are talking about international matters, part of that reason is because there has been an
abject failure of international foreign policy, a reluctance for people to intervene when there has
been absolutely clearly a need to intervene, and that is part of the reason why we have got this
terrible migration of refugees seeking refuge from the terrible conditions. But also I think it is
1800 right that we recognise in here that, right now, not only have we got all these Syrian refugees
that need help, but the UN has just warned that up to 13 million Yemenis face starvation.

These groups, Mr President – and this is my problem with this motion – need action. People
are talking about research, about committees doing this and that. All the while, whilst these
people are talking, people are suffering. I support the Chief Minister's view that the best thing
1805 we can do is get support, aid and action to these people now, not faff around for the next six
months whilst we anguish amongst ourselves whether or not the Isle of Man is the right place
for 25 refugees to come.

As the Hon. Member the Deputy Speaker has just eloquently put across, millions of people
now need proper water, they need sanitary facilities, they need some form of housing, and then
1810 we have got to set about the task of helping them rebuild their country because that is the very
best thing we can do – help them rebuild their infrastructure and put Syria back on track. Let's

not forget it was a fast developing country, Syria. It was not a poor country in the terms of what we have come to understand as poverty stricken. Syria was developing and this terrible war is ripping it apart. My guess is – and I will come on to another subject in a minute – that these people want to go home, they want to go back to their country; they want us to help, they want us to stop the war, they want us to stop the fighting and they want us to help them rebuild their country.

1815
1820 The Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft said, ‘I would like to know what the advantages and disadvantages are for a Syrian refugee.’ I do not think you will ever answer that question because every single case is different. For every single person that would be taken on to one of these schemes, or every family, they will find themselves in a different environment. The Health Minister has talked about yes, it sounds great, and I admire the Isle of Bute for what they have done, but it is not all roses and we know that.

1825 The other point is that the UK has taken 20,000. That is 0.003% of immigrants compared to the overall population. So convert that, and that is 25 for us. There are millions of people and a small fraction, 0.003%, have been taken into an environment in which fellow Muslims, different ethnic groups, support systems and support mechanisms are all there, all in place. The local mosques are there. The community that they want and they seek, if they want that, is there for them. We know – you do not have to be a rocket scientist to know – on the Island that some of the support networks, home comforts if you like, are not freely or abundantly ... or instantly recognisable. I think also 20,000 refugees in whatever city or whatever town they are put in ... I do not think really they are instantly recognisable, necessarily. For us, they are going to be very easily identifiable – and, I will be truthful, I worry about that.

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1835 Mr President, I know you do not want referring to documents, but the other thing I have with this motion is it is asking us to do all the identification of what sort of advantages and what will happen and how people will be looked after and what the requirements are, but it is very easily identified. I think the Northern Ireland communities – and I know Northern Ireland has been mentioned – have clearly identified what refugee status means. It means access to public funds, including all the benefits given to people on low income as well as housing support; entitlement to work; eligibility to claim housing, be admitted to schools, to receive healthcare; access to integration loans – an interest-free loan that covers rental deposit or rent, essential household items and education; family reunions – on application, certain family members can apply to resettle with the person granted refugee status. They talk about interpreters, they talk about social workers, they talk about families, they talk about sponsors; there is a huge amount.

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1845 Mr President, may I suggest you do not need a committee to research this. It is all here for us, it is all clear; the pathway has been set out. I think, really, if Tynwald wants to make a decision it should make a decision. The motion should read that we bring 25 Syrian refugees to the Island, (A Member: Agreed.) not faff around. I have said it before: these people need assistance. To me, the best thing we can do is get the money to the aid agencies, get the infrastructure in place, get the support mechanisms in place to help thousands – not 25, but thousands – at least try and survive this; and when the time comes that the international community has either taken action or peace is declared in Syria, then we need to be proactive. If we have got people available who can get out there to help rebuild the infrastructure, then we should be looking at the best ways that we can help achieve that. But for me, talking about this for another six months achieves absolutely nothing, I think. I am with support and with aid.

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1855 **The President:** My list is growing at this point. I would ask contributors to keep their contributions non-repetitive.

Mr Peake, Hon. Member.

1860 **Mr Peake:** Thank you, Mr President.

Members will know that I am responsible for Social Security, and within that there is much legislation. Legislation is put there to reflect policy and every day our officers have to make hard

1865 decisions but the structure is there for them to help them do that. It is a policy for all, and that is why I do agree with the Chief Minister, in that it is action, it is about money getting to the right place. So I do support that. I do appreciate that people want to get talking about it, but actually it is in place to support that, so I will be not supporting the motion.

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Poole-Wilson.

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Mrs Poole-Wilson: Thank you, Mr President.

1875 I have been listening to the debate with interest and it does strike me that what the Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge said is important, that there is a lot of information being shared right now in this Chamber that I think it is very important that we understand more about and that the public understand more about, so that we make the best possible decision. The other thing I would say is there is nothing that stops us continuing to offer all the support that I am sure we agree is absolutely vital for the time being while we think about could we do more, could we do something different. So I do not see the harm at all in having a select committee that really does investigate this.

1880 I also, from an equality and inclusion perspective, am acutely aware that we are an increasingly diverse society, so the point about the mechanisms we have in our society to welcome people ... We do have people already from a variety of countries, admittedly not with the specific experiences and perhaps difficulties that people who have been a refugee are suffering. But do we have people from different countries? Do we have people from different 1885 cultures? Do we already have a lot of people with English as a second language? Absolutely. Do we do enough? Are we set up appropriately to offer that inclusion that probably we should be aspiring to? I do not know. I think one of the benefits, actually, of this committee would be that in looking at the advantages and disadvantages for Syrian refugees we might really learn some things to our advantage about how we can better support our currently diverse and likely to be 1890 increasingly diverse society if we grow our population in the way that the Government seeks to do.

1895 So I would actually say I support Mrs Caine in bringing this, not only for her courage about looking at the situation of Syrian refugees but I would suggest that there is not very much to be lost for us as an Hon. Court in understanding more about these issues and learning what else we can do.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Hon. Member for Arbory, Malew and Castletown, Mr Cregeen.

1900 **The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mr Cregeen):** Thank you, Mr President. I will be brief.

1905 The Chief Minister and I met with the Disaster Emergency Committee, who complimented the Isle of Man – we were helping thousands of people; not 25, thousands of people. To take those 25 her ... that Hon. Members think we will be able to continue to help all those other thousands that that money will be diverted to. I am aware that the Hon. Member for Garff moving this motion has spoken to the Chief Minister and External Affairs and they have explained the situation to her regarding all the assistance that the Isle of Man is giving to these poor refugees. This is what we are trying to do: trying to help more people, not just trying to restrict it to 25.

1910 The Hon. Member for Middle said about the Isle of Bute. A quick bit of research: the problem they have got on the Isle of Bute at the moment is they cannot get a teacher of Arabic to help those people, so the issue that you are having is, when you are bringing them over here, who is going to be ...? You need translators, you need all these sort of support mechanisms, educational psychologists. There will be additional needs that will be there. At the moment, we are able to 1915 help thousands of people and I am sure the Chief Minister would agree if Hon. Members want to

talk to these people from Disaster Emergency, we can arrange so that we can have that and that information will be disseminated to Members. But quite frankly, what we are doing today is we are going over items where the information is out there. Let's help the thousands of people that we are doing now, rather than just focus on 25.

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The President: Lord Bishop.

The Lord Bishop: Thank you, Mr President.

1925

I think my only comment on this, given the complexity of the issue, would be perhaps about developing what I might call possibly a theology of exodus and exile. Learning, as I often do, from my learned friend Mr Robertshaw, the Hon. Member for Douglas East, I also have in mind the German experience and the image of a hand-pulled wooden cart that you may have seen if you went to the exhibition at the British Museum, 'Germany: Memories of a Nation', which represents not just a nation whose population trudged its belongings around in a hand-pulled wooden cart at the end of the Second World War, but had also done so three centuries earlier at the end of the Thirty Years War in the 17th century. Out of that experience of exodus and exile you form your understanding of how you relate to the wider world, and so Germany takes in huge numbers of refugees because that has been its experience.

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That has not been our experience, that is not currently our understanding, and whilst I think I agree in one sense with pretty much everything that has been said this morning, I would ultimately say perhaps there is no harm in scoping this as a lesson. All we are being asked to do is to set up a select committee, and if that committee were to come back to us with some reflections on exodus and on exile and on the implications of that for humanity, then no matter where we may take that, that in itself might not be a bad thing.

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Thank you, Mr President.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: I call on the mover to reply. Mrs Caine.

1945

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the debate. It has been fascinating and again I think the Isle of Man, Tynwald, this Hon. Court today, has shown itself that there are times when debate really rises up a level. So thank you, everybody, for the debate.

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If I could just respond to a few of the points, first of all I thank my hon. seconder, Miss Bettison, for her support and understanding. Yes, we have seen there is no evidence and, to be able to support, this is all about finding out all the facts, everything around the advantages and disadvantages for the Isle of Man and absolutely at the centre have to be the refugees themselves. We want to do the right thing, we want to step up to our international obligations, but it all centres on what is the best for the refugees, I agree.

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The Chief Minister, Mr Quayle – I agree, we are all absolutely shocked at the plight of the refugees and he feels that we are unable to accept them except through the UK scheme, but the UK scheme ... and in the House of Lords most recently they have said that they are very open to offers of capacity and support, so I think that for a select committee to reconsider all the aspects of this would be timely and would be the right thing for us to do.

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He fears that if the Isle of Man makes special provision for Syrian refugees, others could make a claim or it could be claimed that we were discriminating against other refugees. Well, as far as I am aware, the select committee again can check all the facts and speak with the UK, but if we are participating in this Vulnerable Refugee Resettlement Scheme, it is a particular scheme – I am not sure why that would open us up to all the others.

1965

And in the Isle of Man, pledging the £1.5 million, I agree – I am thrilled that the Isle of Man has taken that step, that that is done in the name of everybody in the Isle of Man, and it is a

1970 really good thing and is going to benefit 30,000 people, but it is rather like giving somebody a fish instead of a fishing rod. How long? It was four months' worth of gas that the provision was for some of those refugees. What about next year and subsequent years? We obviously, as a small nation, cannot help all the millions that are displaced and in horrendous conditions in the refugee camps but when other nations, through the UK's resettlement scheme, have helped a few, could we perhaps look at doing that?

1975 Turning to Mr Shimmins, I thank him very much for his support and I agree, there is moral ... perhaps going back to the Lord Bishop's comments about past experience and how that informs the way forward, the Isle of Man's experience during the Second World War of welcoming enemy aliens, many of whom settled on the Island once they were released, perhaps helps with the Isle of Man's welcoming nature. I have had many offers of support or have been informed about the level of support that there was at the time of the petition that was handed in. Again, a select committee, perhaps more than Government, can establish what support systems would be there and what support would be forthcoming from the community when they were looking into it. So I do thank Mr Shimmins for those comments, and the Lord Bishop, as always, for his very welcome reflections on the meaning of what it is to be human and to welcome other people who have nothing.

1985 Thank you also to the Member for Douglas South, Mrs Beecroft. I think it is laudable to publicly put your name down to welcome Syrian refugees into your home. It is a head versus heart thing, but the motion deliberately steered away from saying ... as Mr Cannan suggested, 'Just say we'll accept 25 refugees, don't faff around.' The point being, following my discussions with Mr Quayle and the Cabinet Office, the Treasury, obviously, and Mr Peake all saying, 'No, it's not possible, we can't do this,' what about coming from the perspective of 'How *can* we do this?' That is what the motion sets out to establish, but not ignoring the fact that it might not be the right thing for the Syrian refugees or for the Island as a whole. So of course those points need to be looked at – and thank you, Mrs Beecroft, for putting that at the centre of your comments today.

1995 I thank Miss August-Hanson for pointing out the £1.5 million we spent on the tram shed yesterday. It is helping a huge number of people and obviously international aid is very important to me. That is all being pledged. I do not see that any committee looking into the facts of the feasibility of the Isle of Man taking a few refugees is in any way going to impact on previously pledged money. But thank you also for your comment to look at advocacy if the committee is successful in getting established.

2000 Mr Ashford from Douglas North, thank you for your contribution and that you fear the capacity in education and healthcare might not be support, and not sure the Isle of Man would meet the criteria of what they need. Well, again, there is not the knowledge outside. Perhaps Cabinet Office have more that they could publish, but I think, especially given the recent answer in the House of Lords, it falls on us to rise to the international obligation and look at what is available.

2010 Just looking at the figures that came out in the Written Question yesterday, I think that there is a grand total of 424 children in primary school who have English as an additional language and obviously they are being supported. It is over 6% in both primary and secondary schools who have English as a foreign language already and I am told ... I think in the census – I remember, it is a long time ago now – there were something like 163 different nationalities now living on the Isle of Man out of a possible 196, although the figures may be wrong because they are from memory. The Island is increasingly multicultural.

2015 Ms Edge and Mrs Sharpe, thank you for your comments and your reflections on what it means to be lonely, and I agree that there would be people and there are people who are willing to be a friend and put a support network in place.

Mr Cannan and Mr Peake, I accept your comments from the perspective of Treasury, but I would be happy for the committee, if put together, to look into that.

2020 Mrs Poole-Wilson, as always, thank you for your comments. This committee is just to look at and get all the facts.

Mr Cregeen, I thank you for your comments.

With that, Mr President, I beg to move.

2025 **The President:** Hon. Members, I put the motion set out at Item 20 on Syrian refugees. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 10, Noes 11

FOR

Dr Allinson
Mr Baker
Mrs Beecroft
Miss Bettison
Mrs Caine
Mr Callister
Mrs Corlett
Ms Edge
Mr Perkins
Mr Shimmins

AGAINST

Mr Ashford
Mr Boot
Mr Cannan
Mr Cregeen
Mr Deputy Speaker
Mr Harmer
Mr Moorhouse
Mr Peake
Mr Quayle
Mr Skelly
Mr Thomas

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys, 10 for and 11 against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0

FOR

Miss August-Hanson
Mr Cretney
Mr Crookall
Mr Henderson
Mrs Hendy
The Lord Bishop
Mrs Lord-Brennan
Mrs Poole-Wilson
Mrs Sharpe

AGAINST

None

Mrs Caine: Mr President –

The President: Just one moment.

2030 In the Council, 9 for and none against. The Branches are in disagreement, therefore the motion fails to carry.

Mrs Caine: Is it possible to ... ?

2035 **The Deputy Speaker:** You cannot, no.

The Clerk: No.

The President: The motion fails to carry.

2040

Mrs Caine: No?

The Deputy Speaker: No.

2045 **The President:** Hon. Members, that brings us to the conclusion of the Order Paper. The Council will now withdraw and leave the House of Keys to transact such business as Mr Deputy Speaker may place before it.

The Council withdrew

House of Keys

2050 **The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members, there being no further business, I adjourn the sitting of this House until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 27th November – getting the date right for once! – in our own Chamber.

Thank you.

The House adjourned at 1.31 p.m.